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Relativism and rationality in theories of natural law and natural rights, in Marx, and in contemporary philosophy

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Relativism and Rationality

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 *Aim of the Thesis*

My aim in this thesis is to make a beginning towards a holistic understanding of the relativism which is so pervasive and dominant in our culture. Relativism can be dealt with easily at a theoretical level, but its refutation at the intellectual level does not seem to loosen its hold on what can only be called the imagination -- for a consistent relativism is only a fantasy. Its hold is evidenced in the form of soft relativism, found for instance in the common sayings "There are no experts in values", "You can't get from is to ought", and "Objectivism is totalitarian". I aim to show that that is because value relativism is motivated by a social bias. I believe that my approach is consistent with that of Marx, but it is not a base/superstructure determinist or even a causal version of historical materialism; rather a traditional rational critique of certain key philosophical positions, with a hermeneutic of their consistency with the possibilities of practice of certain classes. My approach to the problem is through the concepts of the universal and the particular. I would argue that the best statement of the problem is that there is a conflict between relativism and -- not objectivism, or absolutism but -- universalism.

Value relativism is a reductionist scepticism about the human capacity for

rational knowledge of values, of the good for human beings, the right, the due, the proper, the decent and the virtuous, arising from the capacity for *universality* of the *intellect*, a central tenet of European philosophy which was corroded by modernity's "suspicion"[1]. It is essentially the replacement of morality by expediency; scepticism and relativism essentially rely on reductionism. Value relativism is a reduction of values to the *particularity* of the manifold conflicting non-rational *feelings* of atomic individuals (in Hobbes's words "Whatsoever any man desires, that is it which he for his part calleth good").[2] These are reified by utilitarians, mainly as putative *sensations* of *pleasure* which are identified, in a usurping move, with happiness, which had previously referred to an orientation of the will to total good. This reduction is akin to Hobbes's reduction of the heights and depths of love to one-dimensional desire.[3]

The putative opposite, *sensations* of *pain*, are nowadays dignified by the term "suffering", the amelioration of which can be seen as a negative statement of a deontological aim of utilitarianism and as a self-evident supreme good; this is part of the inconsistency of the cosmetic approach to Benthamism which has gone on since John Stuart Mill produced a mixture, and not a compound, of the empiricism of Bentham and the German idealism of Coleridge.[4]

The Stoics had divided the good into the *bonum delectabile, bonum utile,* and *bonum honestum*, the pleasant, the useful and the honourable; the last means that which is worthy of honour, the right, that which is in accordance with right reason. Arguments for the good in that sense necessarily appeal to reason and claim universality. Bargaining about pleasures, on the contrary,

as in the Sophistic convention and the Hobbesian, Lockean and Rawlsian social contracts, produces results which cannot claim to be universally good or valid, but only expedient, since they are relative to the likes and dislikes of the participants, and more especially to their relative bargaining power, which is another nonrational factor. (This is as true of Bentham's market as of Locke's state).

I follow Plato in calling his idea of philosophy, which is the antithesis of sophism, dialectical. He saw it as universalist, both in that it treats universals as forms, ideas, essences or natures, and in that it organises such essences in a unity-in-difference (a "both/and") within a hierarchical universality or totality, a system which reconciles differences in a higher synthesis. The prime example would be the dialectic of Eros in the *Symposium.* There Plato shows that the *fulfilment* of love as the natural *desire* for the finite beautiful *for oneself*, the satisfaction of *need*, is found paradoxically in the ascent to what may seem -- for an analytic "either/or" approach, for which "everything is what it is, and not another thing" -- to be its opposite, outgoing procreative love. That love -- the achievement of *unselfish devotion* to absolute beauty (which is also goodness and truth) for its own sake -- though higher than love as desire, is equally natural, and satisfies a natural need. Getting is completed in giving, which includes sharing the vision of truth, beauty and goodness through education.[5] In the *Republic* Plato's theme is that philosophers would have to govern in the light of another unifying aspect of the dialectic: the unity of the good and the right, happiness and the virtues, the real and the ideal, the "is" and the "ought". To philosophers in the bourgeois era, from Hobbes to Dworkin today, these present themselves as binary opposites, and as the sources of irresolvable conflicts.

I argue that Marx is far from being a "master of suspicion"[6] in the (colloquially speaking) cynical bourgeois relativist tradition of modernity. In fact there is a close connection between Marx's idea of universality and Plato's. For Marx, "man is a universal and therefore free being";[7] man "produces according to the standards of every species...hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty".[8] Proletarian revolution would bring about what Marx calls "the realisation of philosophy";[9] loving production by the "universal class"[10] for physical and spiritual needs, for the development of the potentialities for good of the entire human race.

In pursuit of an understanding of the current social attractiveness of relativism and of the widespread scepticism about reason and universality, I aim to show that there is a profound connection between, on the one hand, the reduction of the universal ontological and moral good to the particular pleasant or useful expedient, which is characteristic of value relativism, and on the other the theory of "mere nature" and of reason as instrumental to pleasure. This is found not only in the Sophists but equally in the possessive individualist theories of natural *rights* as negative freedom. The last are thus like the Sophistic convention theory the *antithesis* of traditional theories of natural *law* as positive freedom. These natural rights theories are seen, by the bourgeois apologists for private property in the means of production, as economic rationality -- conforming to a scientific grasp of "natural" economic laws such as those of supply and demand -- on the part of a postulated "natural" a-social, pre-social and anti-social "Man". In a Lockean version of the self-serving bourgeois divorce between the economic and the political,[11] natural man only *then* enters -- like Rawls's egoistic individual in

the original position, behind the veil of ignorance, but prepared to be subjected to the laws of economics -- into a Sophistic political convention, with the self-serving utilitarian aim of protecting the system of natural property rights. In the Hegelian version of the division of the economic and the political, the a-social "Man" of "abstract right" transcends the self-interestedness of the (particularist) antagonistic natural base of civil society by rising idealistically to the level of political service of the state (the "ethical", the "universal").

I argue that there is on the opposite side of the spectrum a similar profound connection between on the one hand the theory of the dialectical universality of the intellect, and on the other the theory that the natural and rational orientation of a unified and unifying moral, economic and political thought and practice is towards a natural law theory of the common good; and, moreover, that such a natural law theory involves at base an acceptance of common ownership of resources -- which may be diffused, as in Aristotle, but only according to *distributive* justice -- such as is found both in the pre-bourgeois dialectical tradition and in the post-bourgeois return to it; in Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas, and also in Marx.

I aim to show that the Platonic/Aristotelian teleological and communal approach to human nature, and the corresponding essentialist and universalist approach to reason, is essentially irreconcilable with the bourgeois mechanistic and asocial approach to human nature and the nominalist, empiricist, utilitarian and therefore value relativist approach to reason. This is as true today as in fifth century Athens, so that attempts by Rousseau, Hegel, Mill and the later Sartre to reconcile these positions must

fail. Marx's concepts of nature and reason, however, lie wholly within the first approach, and can therefore be the basis for its fulfilment.

I claim that Marx's criticism of Hegel's divorce of particularist civil society and universalist state was a repudiation, as alienation, of Hegel's acceptance, through Rousseau and Kant, of the Sophistic, Hobbesian and Lockean idea of nature which led to the divorce of the economic (as "natural") and the political (as "social"). I also argue that Marx's rejection of modern -- possessive individualist -- *rights* was only the obverse of his Aristotelian return to traditional natural *law*. There the *rights* of the *zoon* who is naturally *politicon* (and, one could add, *economicon*) are derived from the *justice* of the mutually loving members of a community which is dedicated to the physical and spiritual well-being of each and all.

It could be said that my approach to my task is unorthodox; I would suggest that that is because it is exploratory and tentative. It could be said in particular that I am using the terms "dialectical" and "relativist" in an idiosyncratic way. That is partly due to the novelty, the difficulty, and the breadth of the terrain; partly also to my essentialist approach to the problem of rationality and relativism itself. This leads to an either/or approach to the problem, which again requires the difficult search for two appropriate disjunctive terms. This is a problem on which light may be shed by further development and debate on my thesis. It should be noted that I do not see a conflict between my earlier rejection of the disjunctive stance of an exclusively analytic either/or approach, where a holistic approach is required for a broad and deep understanding, and my present insistence on the mutual exclusiveness of two positions which are irreconcilable because the assertion

of both would contravene the law of non-contradiction.

To give an example of essentialist thinking, I would argue, along with d'Entreves[12] and Rommen,[13] that the essence of the traditional natural law approach is a view of reason and nature which allows the possibility of rational knowledge of what is good for the human being, what furthers its *telos*; its *telos* is communal as well as individual, and involves what Marx called "the ensemble of human relations" (Sixth Thesis on Feuerbach).[14] The main point of Marx's Theses on Feuerbach is that a truly human society requires the communal, loving unity of this ensemble of human relations. Instead it is divided up by bourgeois society into antagonistic spheres, the economic ("natural"), the political ("social") and the individualistic "moral" ("Cousin Morality"). This is done in order to prevent moral or political interference with the rights of property-owners (including ironically owners of that liability, rather than an asset, labour power) in a laissez-faire capitalist economy.

Any positive ordinance of this ensemble -- and I would add any structuring of these relationships -- can be criticised by individuals, groups or the community as a whole in the light of right reason (objective right). The subjective legal rights of individuals, groups and the community as a whole *derive from* law, which in turn derives from objective right. (This is contrary to the theory of Hobbes, according to which natural rights and positive laws are essentially *antagonistic*, being natural freedom and social constraint). But although in the older tradition natural rights and positive law are not radically separated or in conflict, nevertheless there are, independent of statute rights, many moral rights proper to a human being, including the right

(subject to the judgment of prudence) to disobey unjust law, and the right and duty to disobey a law which commands acts contrary to the natural law, such as murder.[15]

Given my view of the essence of natural law, I cannot accept that any social contract theory is a natural law theory, even if a proponent such as Rawls maintains that it is, on the grounds of his disjunction between natural law and mainstream utilitarianism. On the contrary, I think the social contract theory is manifestly a return to the Sophistic relativist "wholly other" alternative to the natural law theory, which sees all laws as relative to bargaining power about conflicting arbitrary pleasures; or, in Rousseau's case, the socialisation of the asocial "natural" human being, followed by a degeneration into the tyrannical, due to a post-social institution of private property.[16]

All modern (bourgeois) moralities -- whether social contract or utilitarian -- are tainted by the Sophistic concept of asocial human nature, and most by a hedonistic instrumentalist concept of reason. They are to that extent particularistic and relativist -- in different ways and degrees -- whatever their authors' claims. They are all to that extent alienated, including Kant's retreat to the empty and abstract legalist form of universality, with its logicist test of non-self-contradiction, in an attempt to rescue some form of universality from the particularity of asocial nature. Redemption from such alienation can only come about through a return to the basic dialectical principles of the traditional natural law, as fulfilled in Marx's humanism.

In the last chapter I look briefly at existentialism and at some contemporary

philosophers chosen as illustrations of the problem of the universal and the particular.

1.2 Refutation of Relativism As a Theory

In the light of what I have said in my introduction, and of the nature of my proposals for a contribution to an understanding of relativism, I do not believe much time needs to be spent in discussing the pure theory of relativism, which I believe, like denial of the principle of non-contradiction, reduces all discussion to nonsense. But relativism turns up in many guises. Generally, we can distinguish cognitive relativism, which is about all kinds of knowledge, from moral relativism, which is about matters of value. Protagoras's position for instance is one of thoroughgoing cognitive relativism.[17] Cognitive relativism is not as popular as a weaker kind, moral, value or cultural relativism; it is popularly thought that there is little or no disagreement about "facts", but widespread and total disagreement about "values". Such relativism is often explicitly connected to an "interest" theory, the reductionist theory that values are merely hypocritical expressions of the desire for pleasure and power. It often takes the form of historicism, or of a stagist understanding of "historical materialism", on the strength of which Marx is often misunderstood as a value relativist.

One modern form of cognitive relativism is linguistic relativism, the theory that truth is created by the grammar and semantic system of particular languages. Wittgenstein calls these relative systems of values "forms of life", and the rules established by a particular language a game, that we play as we speak the language; as we play a language game, we take part in a certain "form of life."[18] But his theory cannot avoid a self-referential inconsistency,

for the nature of language would clearly be part of the structure of the world that is supposedly created by the structure of language. Wittgenstein's theory is merely a theory about the nature of language, and as such it is the creation of his own language game. By his own principles, we can play a language game in which the world has an independent structure; then, our realism of will be just as valid as Wittgenstein's constructivism. After all Nazis and the Orange Order (Ireland's K.K.K.) have their own "forms of life"; how then can they be judged better or worse than others?

Once again, like every kind of relativism, Wittgenstein's theory cannot protect itself from its self-referential contradiction. Nor can the theory escape the inconsistency of claiming for itself the very value — objective truth — that it rejects. This idea also appears in an idealist form, for instance in the linguistic theory of Benjamin Lee Whorf.[19] According to Whorf the world has no structure of its own; its structure is entirely imposed by language. This means that learning a different language creates a new and different world, where everything can be completely different from the world we knew before. Whorf's theory has been challenged **by** Noam Chomsky. Chomsky argues that there are "linguistic universals", i.e. structures that are common to all languages.[20] This means that even if language creates reality, reality is going to contain certain universal constants.

We can also see this happen in an important modern form of moral relativism, namely cultural relativism: the theory that a culture could institute pretty much any system of values and that no culture can claim access to any absolute system of values. Cultural relativism is based on the

undoubted truth that human cultures are very different from each other and often embody very different values. The anthropological empirical evidence that cultures are different is usually regarded as the strongest support for cultural relativism, and so for moral relativism.

There are several things wrong with this. Firstly, even if we accept that cultures can have some very different values, this still doesn't prove cultural relativism: for while with cultural *relativists* we must recognise that some constellations and detailed embodiments of values are relative to a particular culture, value *realism* merely needs to point out that not all values are relative to a particular culture, i.e. that some values are cultural universals. If there is even one value that is common to all those cultures, such as that the innocent should not be killed, or that people should not deceive one another, cultural relativism is refuted. "Scientific evidence" can be subjective and it is too easy to draw sweeping conclusions. If an anthropological study sets out to prove a fundamental claim about the nature of value, we must be careful about whether the claim is an empirical one, and about how far difference in values can be argued for.

However, the real problem with cultural relativism and anthropology's support for it is brought out when we consider the normative question of what ought to be. As a methodological principle anthropology is supposed to describe what a culture is like, and it really doesn't fit in with that purpose to spend any time judging the culture or trying to change it. Those jobs can be left to other people. The anthropologist just does the description and then moves on to the next culture, all for the sake of scientific knowledge. However can, it is not possible for a *human being as such* to be so uncritical.

More importantly, cultural relativism gets transformed from a methodological principle for a scientific discipline into a philosophical and moral principle that is supposed to be universally binding: that since all values are specific to a given culture, nobody has the right to impose the values from their culture on to any other culture or to tell any culture that their traditional values should be different.

However, with such a moral principle, we have the familiar problem of self-referential consistency: as a moral value, from what culture does cultural relativism come? And as a way of telling people how to treat cultures, does not cultural relativism actually impose alien values on traditional cultures? The answer to the first question, of course, is that cultural relativism is initially the value of European and American anthropologists, or Western cultural relativists in general. The answer to the second question is that virtually all traditional cultures do not espouse anything like cultural relativism. The Greeks actually gave us the value- and theory-laden word "barbarians," which was freely used by the Romans and which we use to translate comparable terms in Chinese, Japanese, etc. Traditional cultures tend to regard themselves evaluatively as "the people," the "real people," or the "human beings," while everyone else is wicked, miserable, treacherous, sub-human, etc. The result of this is that if we want to establish a moral principle to respect the values of other cultures, we cannot do so on the basis of cultural relativism; for our own principle would then mean that we cannot respect all the values of other cultures.

On the other hand, we might try to save cultural relativism by denying that it

is a moral principle. Of course, if so, there wouldn't be anything wrong with one culture conquering and exterminating another, especially since that has actually been the traditional practice of countless cultures during the ages. However the principle of cultural relativism rarely enters public debate without being used as a moral principle to forbid someone from altering or even from criticizing some or all the values of specific cultures. (This could also be a form of complacent isolationism resulting from a sense of invulnerability, as is perhaps reflected in the current Star Trek's "prime directive", a postmodernist laissez-faire in which it differs from the blatant imperialism of the earlier Star Trek). As a practical matter, then, it is meaningless to try and save cultural relativism by erasing the moral content that is usually claimed for it.

Refutations of scepticism and relativism in principle are easy, and are a version of the argument for basic logical principles as the inescapable basis of thought; they turn on the meaning of negativity. Among the standard theoretical objections to relativism is the argument that relativism is self-refuting: that relativists cannot consistently hold their position, for to claim that truth is relative is to adopt an absolute or non-relative position. It is characteristic of all forms of relativism that they wish to preserve for themselves the very principles that they seek to deny to others. Thus, relativism basically presents itself as a true doctrine, which means that it will logically exclude its opposite (objectivism or rationalist realism); but what it actually says is that no doctrines can logically exclude their opposites. If the claims about value are not supposed to be true, then they cannot exclude their opposites. Relativism wants for itself the very thing (objectivity) whose existence it denies. Someone who advocates relativism, then, may just have a

problem recognizing how their doctrine applies to themselves. Logically this is self-referential inconsistency; you are inconsistent when it comes to considering what you are actually doing. It is a case of wanting to have your cake and eat it.

Another similar argument is that the relativist attempt to deny universals and essences presupposes what it is denying: the relativists claim that there is no such thing as an essence, but the fact that they are prepared to discuss the essence of their position is a performative contradiction of their theory.

Thus, relativism when universalised is self-defeating. But intellectual refutation is not effective in dealing with relativism as a social phenomenon, especially in diluted forms, such as what is called soft relativism (e.g. "There are no experts in values"). The arguments against relativism may seem conclusive, but there is a penumbra of unspoken assumptions and arguments (accounts of reason and philosophical method, of nature and of human nature) which are held to bolster the relativist position, and which do not seem to be affected by the head-on refutation of a statement of it as an isolated generalised thesis.

Effective consideration of the problem of relativism therefore requires looking at the cluster of social, political and economic positions which are typically espoused by adherents of relativism and scepticism about rationality, and by their opponents. Authentically human reasoning is dialectical and seeks the universal; the one, the good, infinity, openness, justification, positive freedom, emancipation, common ownership and love. This is the basis of the natural law tradition. Alienated relativism on the

contrary is biologistic or mechanistic, and seeks the particular; the many, pleasure, the finite, closure, causal explanation, negative freedom, oppression, and the war of all against all for private property. This is the basis of the Sophist convention theory, as well as of Hobbes.

A reply to relativism thus requires looking not only at the intellectual but also at the social, political and economic contexts in which relativism arises, and in which it has theoretical and practical ramifications. It therefore seems important to look in the first place at the political and economic implications of its classical statement by the sophists, and of Plato's dialectical reply, which founded the natural law tradition. But it is especially necessary to look at the significant echoes of these positions in renaissance and Anglo-French enlightenment reductionism and scepticism, connected to the Cartesian and Kantian dichotomies. The dialectical and natural law tradition combats relativism, whereas the modern rights approach of the Hobbesian social contract theory is relativist, as are utilitarianism and Nietzschean amoralism, with its postmodern variants. They have concepts of reason, nature, and value antithetical to those of the natural law tradition. These lead to moral, political and economic positions which justify conflict, which favour dominating and exploiting classes, and which therefore dominated and exploited classes embrace hopefully, but at their peril.

The modern dialectical reply to such value relativism is found in the survival of the natural law tradition, in neo-Platonism, in Rousseauan romanticism and German idealism. It includes Marx's Aristotelian and Feuerbachian dialogical (I-Thou) humanism, which belongs to the natural law tradition. Marx has long been interpreted as sharing the modern relativism found in

positivism, but his Aristotelian ontology is totally opposed to both positivism and relativism. Marx is critical of the "Robinsonades" whose abstract view of human nature was that of individuals isolated from society, to whom all values are relative, the good being reducible to their pleasure. That view is not reason, and an attack on it should not be seen as an attack on reason, but rather on irrationalism. The same is true of some forms of attack on the theory of the idealist *Cogito*, including on its Hegelian form, even in spite of Hegel's concessions to the historical and social embodiment of mind.

The essence of the conflict between relativism and a universalism based on rationality is the opposition between (1) undialectical reductionism of all universalist claims except its own to the abstract category of the particular pleasure- and power-seeking of the a-social, pre-social and anti-social individual (the bourgeois "atom"), and (2) dialectical ascent to the concrete category of the universal. Hegel's secularist solution lies in the reconciliation of private property and the state, Kierkegaard's religious one in the self-making of the Socratic but a-social "individual". The best solution lies in Marx's application of Hegel's concept of the universal class (in Hegel's theory the bureaucracy, as servant of the universal, the ethical, the state) to the proletariat, as the class which does not require to exploit any other class, and hence can unite humanity. A proper understanding of that concept may also help to answer the problems raised by the contemporary conflicts between the particular and the universal evidenced in "communitarianism", the "new social movements", "identity politics", and postmodern concerns about closed totalities.

In principle that solution would be a refutation of the concept of nature as

mechanical, and of reason as instrumental, and the restoration of a concept of reason as spiritual, that is, totalising but infinite and open-ended. It would recognise that while it is true that all justifiable social movements of liberation from oppression express parts, but none of them the whole, of the demands of reason as justice, there is an important truth in Marx's insight that production for physical need is basic, that class is a reality, and (while recognising the importance of Marx's hopes for Russian agrarian communism) that the working-class as the class of direct producers is now the only one which could bring about that unification of the human race in a system of production for need which is necessary to ward off disaster. It is not a question of the "primacy" of one demand over another, e.g., in Ireland of the much asserted primacy of the class over the national question; rather of, to quote Lukács, "the primacy of the category of totality" (of holistic universality, or dialectics) -- which in such a case would see the interrelationship of both in the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle. The rational approach is not abstract; thus "nation" is an abstract universal, like "labour" in Marx's 1857 Introduction to the *Grundrisse*, which he momentously replaced with the concrete concept of the *commodity* labour *power*. "Nation" must be similarly concretised as "oppressor nation" or "oppressed nation".

Chapter 2. The Ancient and Mediaeval Natural Law Tradition.

2.1 The Undialectical Approach: The Sophists.

The first clear statement of relativism comes with the Sophist Protagoras, as quoted by Plato, "The way things appear to me, in that way they exist for me; and the way things appears to you, in that way they exist for you".[21] Thus, however I see things, that is actually true — for me. If you see things differently, then that is true — for you. There is no separate or objective truth apart from how each individual happens to see things. Consequently, Protagoras says that there is no such thing as falsehood. Also, there is no reason why I should tell anybody else what I believe, since it is then none of my business to influence their beliefs. Relativism thus has the strange logical property of not being able to deny the truth of its own contradiction because, if Protagoras says that there is no falsehood, he cannot say that the opposite of his own doctrine is false.

Unfortunately for Protagoras this would make his own profession meaningless, since his aim is to teach people how to persuade others of their own beliefs. It would be a contradiction to tell others that what they believe is just as true as what you say, but that they should nevertheless accept what you say. So Protagoras qualified his doctrine: while whatever anyone believes is true, things that some people believe may be better than what others believe. Protagoras wants to have it both ways, i.e. that there is no

falsehood except what he says is false -- and that is the typical dilemma of relativism.

Protagoras's way out, that his view must be "better", doesn't make any sense either: one must ask, better than what? Than opposing views? But there are no opposing views, by relativism's own principle. Saying that one thing is "better" than another is always going to involve some claim about what is actually good, desirable, worthy, beneficial, etc., but no such claims make any sense unless we give a rational basis about why they are so.

Plato thought that such a qualification reveals the inconsistency of the whole doctrine. His basic argument against relativism is the following: if things exist in the way they appear to me, if anything that appears to me is true; then it must be true that Protagoras's doctrine is false, if I say it.

Although Protagoras gives us a principle of cognitive relativism, his own main interest was for its consequences in matters of value: that truths of right and wrong, good and evil, and the beautiful and the ugly, are relative. This is value or moral relativism. It may seem a more plausible theory than general cognitive relativism. It is popularly believed that people disagree much more about matters of value than they do about matters of fact. And if we are talking about something like justice or goodness, it is much more difficult even to say what we are talking about than it is when we are talking about things like tables and chairs. We can point to the tables and chairs and assume that other people can know them, but we have a much tougher time pointing to justice and goodness. Nevertheless, moral relativism suffers from the same kinds of self-referential paradoxes as cognitive relativism.

Protagoras like all the Sophists[22] maintained that the laws are a convention; they are invented not discovered, and their only purpose is to serve individuals' interests in terms of life, health, pleasure, wealth etc., which are seen as the only genuine values of human nature. Their relativism as understood by Plato, took the form of the question why I should be moral. The answer, in terms of the connection between reason ("why...?") and morality took Plato twelve books of the *Republic* to answer. It required understanding the nature of reason, of nature as a whole, of human nature, and of the relation between them. Their statement of the problem also highlighted the importance of the egoistic individual ("I") in creating the problem in the first place. It posed the problem in terms of a conflict of particular wills, of desire and power. Its impossible aim was to answer the question without acknowledging any community of universal binding rationality.

The question "Why should I be moral?" could be a genuinely rational one, in which case there would be no problem of relativism implied. What would be sought is an understanding of morality, reason and nature. This is already to adopt a rational and moral position, and only leaves the problem of justifying one set of goods, values and ideals over another, in particular circumstances -- cultural and historical -- where debate is indeed healthy for reason itself.

If, however, the question is, like the sophists', a rhetorical one posed in bad faith, expecting any answer to fail inevitably, then it is really an expression of will, not of reason. In this interpretation its truculence would express the belief that in this particular case "reason" is only a camouflage for power,

and "right" really only might. It would be frankly antagonistic and aggressive, prejudging the opponent as being equally wilful and as giving only pseudo-reasons, in bad faith towards the questioner -- and/ or towards him/herself. This belief (possibly true in any given case, since interlocutors differ) instead of being defended by arguments appropriate to the situation, which is a difficult exercise, is facilely generalised to cover *all* claims to rationality. Even that belief might conceivably be contingently true, but each claim would have to be examined in its own right. The conceptual believe difference between reason and will (in this sense) is clear, and a genuine universal rationality uncontaminated by particular will is logically possible, however difficult and rare it may be. If that is denied, then the proposition expressing the denial is itself a case of will, not reason. That is reductionist.

In any case, for undialectical thinkers such as the sophists, the concept of nature is reductionist. It is contrasted with art (technology) as the mere, crude given which requires shaping to human ends. Reasoning is always purely instrumental - to secure one's own selfish ends or wants. Modern **nominalism** (Ockham) and positivism[23] in epistemology and ontology are remarkably similar to the outlook of the sophists, particularly their instrumental view of reason. In both cases thought or thinking are only finite parts of being; thoughts or systems of thought are merely particular things caused by spatio-temporal events including subjective desires and passions.

For such undialectical thinkers, reality is a sum of atomic entities, infinity is mere endless multiplicity, and value is a relation of subjective (relative) desire between one finite thing and another. The unity sought by sophistic

reductionism is relativist disunity. It is the opposite of the unity sought by dialectical reason, because it reduces all explanation and understanding to a single principle e.g. pleasure, will (command, force, positive law etc.), and takes a partial and distorted particular view of human nature, for example as a closed mechanism instead of as a rational (spiritual) developing organism.

The dialectical and the undialectical approaches are antithetical in their ontology and their epistemology, their view of nature and of reason. Each of these approaches must regard the other as unrealistic and irrational. The sophists reject any concept of essence, Idea or Form and they also reject any notion of transcendence. For them, humans could not possibly transcend their finite, given nature, in order to reach, strive for, or realise (actualise) our essence. The sophists' reductionist account of human nature rejects any possibility for us to develop our latent potentials so that we may become more truly what we should and can be. Rather they insist that human nature is totally and unchangeably as they claim we find it; but they only look at human behaviour in selected particular situations and circumstances, especially of conflict of wills over pleasure, property, money and power. Thus humans are seen as unable to change or develop themselves or others by participating in or imitating an Ideal or essence. This model of human nature encourages selfishness and aggression by claiming that those characteristics are a permanent, unchangeable ("eternal") fact about humans. The sophists thus break up the dialectical, hierarchical view of the ideal unity of all things, by infinitising and absolutising a finite state of affairs. In so doing they limit, stunt and thwart our whole being by closing off the possibility of transcendence or true being -- the unique human capacity for reaching beyond the particular, and actualising or realising the universal.

The class basis of moral relativism in the ancient world is brilliantly captured by Plato in portraits of three differing interpreters of morality as sophistic convention. The upper-class Callicles in the *Gorgias*, the vitalist leader of the pack, believes that justice (morality) is a conspiracy of the weak invented to clip the wings of the stronger, who according to natural justice should rule. His vitalist immoralism, like that of Nietzsche[24] (a source for right wing anarchism) contrasts with the middle class ("petty bourgeois") calculating crude materialism which Glaucon, Plato's brother, presents (as a devil's advocate). In this version justice is seen by each individual as an insurance policy which is the best bet to produce the greatest amount of pleasure for him or herself. Glaucon's version, like Hobbes's, views morality or justice as a convention which is an artificial corrective to our brute nature. That view of morality sees reason as serving the passions in order to obtain the best deal in a situation of danger from everyone. So one should be ready to give up one's natural tendency to attack others as long as they give up theirs—morality takes away some of our natural rights (freedoms) in order to protect other rights. But it is not "rational" to keep the rules if one can get away with breaking them.

Thrasymachus, finally, represents the underdog view of justice as convention or social contract, like that of the left wing anarchist. He views all morality (justice) as the advantage of the stronger over the weaker. In this he is in a way the antithesis of Callicles. Thrasymachus maintains an important half-truth in that the numerically stronger or the more powerful have indeed usually 'justified' (rationalised) their power over the weaker. He fails to see (but Socrates says he will keep trying to convince him) that there is a

Platonic alternative model of humanity which offers not a class view of justice, but a universal dialectic of justice. Thrasymachus, like those anarchists who claim the legacy of Stirner, cannot envisage the possibility of a form of life which has as its goal the perfection of both individual and community through the implementation of reasonable authority, i.e. one open to rational discussion about what is reasonable, good, right or just for everybody, and not the imposition of someone else's will to enforce the (objectively irrational) interests of others.

A good way of understanding the sophists is to look at J. L. Mackie's *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*. He advocates a Protagorean relativism and follows the sophists in asserting that there are no objective values. He believes the truest teachers of moral philosophy

> are the outlaws and thieves who, as Locke says, keep faith and rules of justice with one another, but practise these as rules of convenience without which they cannot hold together, with no pretence of receiving them as innate laws of nature.[25]

This does not even draw upon the folk-wisdom which understands that "outlaws" are often, like Robin Hood, only outside unjust laws, and often keep faith and rules of justice not as rules of convenience but precisely because, unlike the laws of the Sheriff of Nottingham, these are seen as innate laws of nature. Like the sophist Lycophron, Mackie believes that "a moral sense", law, and justice are not natural, rather they are invented to enable men to live together in communities. His book is intended to prove

the relativity of morals on the ground that there is by nature no morality before or beyond the "morality" agreed by particular individuals. He writes

> 'Moral sense' or 'intuition' is an initially more plausible description of what supplies many of our basic moral judgements than 'reason'. With regard to all these starting points of moral thinking the argument from relativity remains in full force.[26]

Mackie believes that a unitary theory of a rational good has nothing to do with morality. Rather he insists that the feelings or intuitions of the individual are what constitute morality and, as there is a radical diversity among individuals regarding the goals they find satisfying, it is implausible that they will agree on a unifying moral theory.

2.2 The Dialectical Approach: Plato, the Unity of Morals, Politics and Economics.

Just as the sophists provide the archetype of relativism, so Plato provides the archetype of a response to it.[27] Any answer to the problem of sophistic moral relativism would need to provide an account of morality, especially justice, which would not be a disguise for social, political or economic power-seeking on the part of anybody. For Callicles natural justice is the rule of the stronger; for Plato that is a case of might usurping right. Plato claimed that a fully satisfactory answer could only be seen in the light of a society in which the stronger does not rule. The only way that this could be

guaranteed is in the communism of his first, "healthy" society in the *Republic*.[28] But as Glaucon's request to Socrates — to prove that justice is always beneficial to the just person —pointed out, and as Socrates's death witnessed, the real problem is to understand the point of pursuing morality even in the *absence* of such a just society; in other words when it is not requited.

Plato was living and working in a culture in which sophistic "values" such as those of Protagoras and other sophists were in conflict with traditional religiously sanctioned communal notions of justice. The dialectic of the twelve books of the *Republic* is his attempt at answering the crucial question of relativism, why I should be moral (just) rather than follow my own pleasure. His whole philosophy can be seen as an attack on Protagorean undialectical relativism, which views customary morality and justice as a bargain, a matter of convention, rather than as befitting our nature. In fact our nature is seen as a-social, pre-social and anti-social, and what befits it is bargaining, if we are not strong enough to make our pleasure the rule of society.

Plato has a different concept of nature and of mind from that of Callicles and the sophists. His dialectic unites nature and mind, being and value, in defining the nature or essence of a thing, what it really is, as its ideal— Aristotle spoke of this as the fullest development (actualisation) of its potential. For Plato such natures are only intelligible within a totality, a hierarchical cosmos, in which humans participate through transcending their finite existence by participating more fully in the Forms inhering in the infinite mind in which our finite minds participate.[29] The good is

hierarchical; the good for the rational animal is to be rational. The nature of mind or reason is to discover universal necessities; examples are mathematics and logic. Things are measured by their essence or nature. The finite -- for example a given system of justice -- only has value in its relation to what it ought to be and can be, the perfection or actualisation of its nature. What it ideally is, is what it really, essentially, is. However, existentially or in fact, it may not match up to its essence; courts of law are also called courts of justice, but the treatment they dispense may not be just.

Plato claims that such essences, or universals, are a distinct class of entities, that concrete things are images of their Form [30], that Ideas or Forms are objective, separate from sensible things; Forms do not change and are eternal. For Plato we are able to apprehend the Forms through a dialectical ascent of the mind from the sensible world of flux to the immutable and eternal world of the Forms.[31] These are objects belonging not to the multifarious, changing world of sense, but to another, unchanging world, apprehended by the intellect through a dialectical ascent. There is a hierarchy within the Forms, at the head of which is the Form of the Good. The idea of the good is not just any one idea among all others; rather, in Plato's view it occupies a pre-eminent place. Plato describes a hierarchical ascent from particularity to Form, and then ultimately to the absolute apex, the Form of the Good. The Form of the Good is beyond all other forms, even beyond being. It is from this principle that all truth is deduced. Mind, nature, value and being are united in the dialectic of the whole, the totality or unity.

Justice therefore cannot be defined in any narrow way, e.g. "Justice is fairness" or "Justice means to do good to your friends and harm to your

enemies" or "Justice means to obey the law of the land". The essence or form of justice can only be understood in a holistic approach to social human nature.

It is worth noting that the Forms are not totally separate from us: for Plato, we imitate them and participate in them; the forms equate with being and the sensible with becoming: the things in the sensible world are imperfect representations of their true Form. Unlike the Sophists Plato claims universal, objective standards. His theory of forms deals not only with logical but with moral questions.[32] He sees mathematical truths as paradigmatic: just as 2 + 2 = 4 (even if the whole world is asleep as Augustine said, or one might say even if the human race ceased to exist) – so killing the innocent is wrong. He believes that objective moral standards exist in the same way mathematical truths exist; they exist independently of us as ideal truths.

The transcendent Forms of Plato are thus the negation of sophistic reductionism. But how are we to come to know this metaphysical world? For Plato mind is, of its nature, directed toward the objective good of the whole. In order for our finite minds to be in tune with this absolute, universal, infinite Mind we must use our reason with the aim of the objective good. It is only in dialectical reasoning that we can ascend to a unitary and holistic understanding of being and rationality, nature and mind.

For Plato we are able to have knowledge of the Forms because the soul is immortal: it is eidetic, "Formlike": it exists in the same sphere as the Forms, although it is not a Form itself.[33] He sees man as in between the sensible

world and the eternal world of the Forms; man belongs to the world of becoming and passes away because of his body, but he also belongs to the world of being because of the eternal part of his soul.[34]

The Form of the Good (*Republic* 505a) is what Socrates claims should be the most important study of the philosophers, who should rule the city. It is from this highest Form that all truth, goodness and beauty is intelligible.[35] Plato illustrates the study of the Form of the Good through his similes of the sun and the cave and the divided line analogy. While the metaphor of the line is epistemological, Plato emphasises in the metaphor of the cave that the ascent is an ethical or moral one. In the cave metaphor the central message is that of conversion. The ascent from the cave is liberating and enlightening. On this journey from darkness to light the self is released from conformity, through a developing and enriching struggle for the attainment of truth. The culmination of the whole journey is comprehension of the Good; this is not merely what is good for the seeker, or good for others, or good in relation to anything or anyone -- it is simply unqualified absolute good.

Plato tells us that

> What is at issue is the conversion of the mind from a kind of twilight to the true day, that climb up into reality which we shall say is true philosophy.[36]

This necessary turning around of the soul will be painful and difficult. Plato tells us, "the glare of the fire will dazzle him".[37] But once he has seen the light he will be reluctant to return to the cave and to his fellow prisoners. For

when he has engaged in such divine contemplation he will want to stay up there forever.[38] But the philosophers must return to the cave; like Socrates they must be liberators (saviours, bringers of salvation), in order to help the prisoners.

For Plato the whole of life is movement on a moral scale; knowledge is a moral quest as the mind seeks reality and desires the Good, which is the transcendent source of spiritual power. Just as the sun gives the eye the power to see and can by virtue of this power be glimpsed, so the Form of the Good gives truth to the objects of knowledge and the power of knowing to the knower.

> It is the cause of knowledge and truth, and you will be right to think of it as being itself known and yet as being something other than, and even more splendid than, knowledge and truth, splendid as they are.[39]

The connection made by Plato of knowledge (of truth) and learning with goodness provides a deep intelligible conception of moral change. Knowledge is essentially related to morality by the idea of truth. Truth is not a collection of facts, immediate knowledge of particulars, but a grasp of universals (essences) in an understanding which totalises objective and subjective reality, the known and the knower (and lover). The search for truth and for a closer connection between thought and reality demands virtue and a purification from covetousness and desire. Knowledge, goodness and reality are thus seen to be connected -- a unity. Through learning and striving we begin to see clearly and have the ability to think seriously and honestly.

So for Plato goodness joins with knowledge to create a moral vision in which we attain knowledge of the divine. The Good is our source of energy and is the cause of thinking which attains truth and moral understanding. As Plato puts it

> the capacity for knowledge is innate in each man's mind, and that organ by which he learns is like an eye which cannot be turned from darkness to light unless the whole body is turned; in the same way the mind as a whole must be turned away from the world of change until its eye can bear to look straight at reality, and at the brightest of all realities which is what we call the good.[40]

It must be stressed however that in the *Republic* as in other dialogues Socrates treats the idea of the Good as something that is difficult to grasp and that can be observed only in its effects. Like the sun, which by giving warmth and light gives everything its being and perceptibility, the good is present for us only in the gifts it bestows -- goodness and truth and beauty. The sun, supreme in the visible realm, corresponds to the Good, supreme in the realm of thought. It enables the objects of knowledge to be known by the mind, as the objects of sight are seen by the eye. Further, just as the sun causes things not only to be seen but to grow and come into being, so the Good gives the objects of knowledge not just their knowability but their reality, though it is itself beyond reality (or beyond being).

> The good therefore may be said to be the source not only of the intelligibility of the objects of knowledge, but also

> of their being and reality; yet it is not itself that reality, but is beyond it, and superior to it in dignity and power.[41]

So the soul animated by *eros* can hope to catch a glimpse of the Good[42] although we are never able to fully apprehend the Good; nonetheless this is for Plato the proper direction in which to travel. For Plato

> ...our true lover of knowledge naturally strives for reality, and will not rest content with each set of particulars which opinion takes for reality, but soars with undimmed and unwearied passion till he grasps the nature of each thing as it is.[43]

This points to a spiritual pilgrimage from *appearance* to *reality*. We turn round, we climb up, we raise our heads. We undertake a difficult journey of disciplined purification of intellect and passion, wherein passion (*eros*) becomes a spiritual force.[44] In this Platonic turn, *eros* becomes the guide to the Idea.[45] For loving desire is part of the very name *philo-sopher* (lover of wisdom). The myth[46] of the cave envisages possible emergence into the sunlight, but this ideal is something to be achieved, a *telos* or goal.[47] Plato constantly reminds us of the difficulties and perils involved and maintains that very few will make the grade. However there is help at hand to whoever attempts the ascent; the light of the Good as love, truth, justice, beauty gives life to reality for the pursuer of enlightenment. This imagery suggests the unique spiritual element in life, a salvific pilgrimage, a moral journey, leading to redemption or liberation.

For Plato philosophy is a way of life,[48] and his discussion of the Good in the *Republic* has a practical and ethical bearing. Knowledge of the good requires love of the good. An education following this path, he tells us, becomes enriching and leads to real human flourishing (*eudaimonia*). This is an essentialist, teleological view of life; it joins what we are to what we should and can be. Plato sees the human soul as an "inner *politeia*" and the *polis* (city state) as an expanded soul.[49]

What is ordered (rational, in the sense of spiritual) is good and what is disordered is bad; this is true of both individual and state. This is a key Platonic theme. For Plato the order of man in society is part of the cosmic order. The establishment of the *politeia* within oneself is the aim of education in general; what we can call an "inner Republic" or positive freedom—the freedom that is achieved by governing ourselves by reason rather than being governed by passions, impulses or addictions. When we fix the 'gaze of our souls' on the Good itself we can use it as a paradigm for the right ordering of the polis and the citizens, for the rest of our lives.[50]

> the final thing to be perceived in the intelligible region, and perceived only with difficulty, is the form of the good; once seen, it is inferred to be responsible for whatever is right and valuable in anything, producing in the visible region light and the source of light, and being in the intelligible region itself controlling source of truth and intelligence. And anyone who is going to act rationally either in public or private life must have sight of it.[51]

As we have seen, this dialectical process is a progressive purification of possessiveness and the passions; a patient and continuous change of one's whole being from a world of appearance to that of reality: the ongoing search for truth, where we change our orientation to keep looking in the right direction, to the Forms and ultimately to the Form of the Good. This is dialectical reasoning.

It is also of crucial importance to recognise the different uses of dialectic made by Plato and Hegel. For Hegel the Kingdom of Prussia (the ideal state) comes about as a rational requirement or logical necessity of Mind (*Geist*) unfolded in history; it could not have been otherwise.[52] Whereas for Plato as for Marx, the attempt to actualise the ideal (the Platonic Republic, or Marx's communism) was a rational task to be achieved. Plato attempted just such a task in Syracuse.

Plato argued that the truly just society could be achieved only when philosophers become the governors of society; only the philosopher can bring into being and maintain in being a state in which justice is embodied both in political arrangements and in the soul, because the crowning accomplishment in the education of the philosophers of the ideal state must be knowledge of the good. In the first -- "healthy" -- society in Plato's *Republic* communism is the rule; even in the second best -- "feverish" -- society,[53] Plato tells us that a strict necessity of the life led by the philosopher rulers is that they should be communists in the sense that money and private property are banned for rulers; this for Plato was part of the embodiment of reason in society. Marx shared Plato's first insight: in order

for mind to rule everyone would have to be communists.[54]

For Plato, only with the eye of his mind fixed on the good can the philosopher ruler govern justly and wisely and discern truth from falsehood, good from bad, beautiful from ugly. Otherwise he does not know what he is talking about:

> If a man cannot define the form of the good and distinguish it clearly in his account from everything else, and then battle his way through all objections, determined to give them refutation based on reality and not opinion, and come through with his argument unshaken, you wouldn't say he knew what the good in itself was, or indeed any other good.[55]

Plato is concerned not only with moral but with ontological justice i.e. with being human. He sees justice as an essential part of our nature, not like the sophists as merely a convention or type of insurance policy entered into out of fear. The sophistic conventional "morality" and "justice" is confronted by its antithesis, a universal morality (rationality) and a universal justice. Dialectical thought responds to sophism by advocating the overcoming of the *particular*, relative 'justice' of the sophists (Athenian justice, Persian justice etc.) through the *universal* form of justice. For Plato justice can only fully be achieved in community, although Socrates as an individual achieved justice to a great extent in spite of his society. Both individual and society can become just if both let their lives be ordered by the good. This is achieved when we govern ourselves by practical wisdom, reason, courage

and temperance.

> For when the philosopher has been trained in mathematical and dialectical enquiry he will be able to discern what justice itself is, what beauty itself is, what truth is and above all other forms he will be able to see as far as this is possible what the Form of the Good is; even if it is only a glimpse, or an insight for it can never be seen totally itself. Then and only then is he in a fit state to instruct others and lead them on the journey to what is really real -- the true and the good and the beautiful.[56]

Unlike contemporary aesthetic theorists Plato separates art from beauty, because he regards beauty as too serious a matter to be commandeered by art. In the *Republic* Plato is concerned that in a future just society art has the potential to be used as a destructive force: because art can appeal to the lower part of the soul by encouraging immorality, harmful errors, untruths and illusions;[57] but beauty is different. Beauty (*to kalon*, the fine or noble) gives us immediate access to goodness and truth;[58] our attraction to beauty is the noble desire for goodness and truth. Plato's theory of Forms expresses a certainty that goodness is something real, unitary, and simple, but not fully expressed in the sensible world. So for Plato the good is at the same time the beautiful; it does not exist somewhere apart for itself and in itself.[59] Beauty, symmetry or measuredness, and truth are the three structural components of the good which appears as the beautiful.

> In every case...moderation and proportion seem, in effect,

> to be beauty and excellence. So now this property we're looking for, goodness, has taken refuge in beauty.[60]

In the *Philebus* as in the *Republic* Plato speaks of the difficulty of locating the Good. Plato holds that love or desire for the beautiful prompts *anamnesis* (remembering) and the good comes to us in the guise of the beautiful. Gadamer explains the importance and role of beauty in Platonic philosophy.

> Beauty shines forth most of all, and it most of all stimulates love in us. Thus it awakens in the lover the longing and passion for what is higher.[61]

The beautiful comes to be regarded as the direct presence of the divine in man and the cosmos.[62] Plato was convinced that salvation concerns the whole soul: the soul must be saved entire by the redirection of its energy away from selfish fantasy toward reality. This dialectical process begins with looking upon what is visibly beautiful and leads to a vision of eternal beauty, and so on to a plane of ontological enlightenment[63] in which one looks upon that beauty with "the eye of the mind". Because virtue in general may not attract us beauty presents spiritual values in a more accessible and attractive form. In this conception of the beautiful Plato gives to sexual love and transformed sexual energy a central place in his philosophy. This desire takes the form of a yearning to create in and through beauty, which may appear distorted as at base sexual love or love of fame, but may be dialectically transformed as the truest love and desire, the love of wisdom or philosophy and of its inculcation in others; the desire for (or pursuit of) universal, infinite truth, beauty and goodness.[64]

> [We] escape from the mean petty slavery of the *particular* case and turn toward the *open sea* of beauty (my italics).[65]

Beauty, Plato insists, shows itself to the best part of the soul as something to be desired yet respected, adored and not *possessed.* He believes that the desire for beauty is an attraction or desire for the good which can with proper instruction overcome egoism and transfigure hedonistic desire.

> The proper way to go about or be guided through the ways of love is to start with beautiful things in this world...you should use the things of this world as rungs in a ladder. You start by loving one attractive body and step up to two; from there you move on to physical beauty in general, from there to the beauty of people's activities, from there to the beauty of intellectual endeavours, and from there you ascend to that final intellectual endeavour, which is no more and no less than the study of that beauty, so that you finally recognise true beauty.[66]

Here, Plato embarks upon a dialectical enquiry into the essence of love.[67] Effectively what Plato has introduced is the dialectical unification of eros, the desire for the finite, with the love which is of infinite absolute Beauty[68] and leads to the practice of loving others as you would have others love you (the Golden Rule). *Eros* is both truly good and beautiful, dialectically unifying goodness, truth and beauty.

2.3 Aristotle and the Oikos: Ancient Economy

It is my argument that significant relativism such as that of the sophists and the bourgeoisie is an expression of, and an excuse for, a particular political and socio-economic will to power. The kind of political and socio-economic thinking which is opposed to such relativism finds a brilliant archetype in the basic principles of Aristotle's political and economic theory, which provided a paradigm for the critical basis of Marx's alternative to bourgeois political economy.

Aristotle, in the philosophical tradition of Plato, engaged in direct criticism of the Sophists. He rejected the theory of the sophist Lycophron, a doctrine similar to that of mainstream contemporary liberalism's belief that the law of a political community should be morally *neutral*, and merely a "guarantor of men's rights against one another".[69] Instead, Aristotle believed that the law of the polis should be a rule of life which would enable the members to become good and just, to live well. In the *Politics* he writes,

> a polis is not an association for residence on a common site, or for the sake of preventing mutual injustice and easing exchange. There are indeed conditions which must be present before a polis can exist; but the presence of all these conditions is not enough in itself to constitute a polis. What constitutes a polis is an association of households and clans in a good life, for the sake of attaining a perfect and self-sufficing existence... It is

> therefore for the sake of good actions and not for the sake of social life that political associations must be considered to exist.[70]

For Aristotle's economic thinking, true wealth is to be found in living the good life, living well, *eu zen*; it is not found in money or any other private material good, but in using those things for the communal good. His theory therefore tends to focus its attention on what the proper use of wealth is; it is for the free and good life of the individual citizen or the city.[71] An enormous collection of commodities/money is not wealth. This traditional natural law notion of true wealth, found also in Aquinas, is akin to Marx's concept of the production of use-values in line with the full development of the human personality within the interdependence of the community. Aristotle writes

> It is like the story told of Midas: just because of the inordinate greed of his prayer everything that was set before him was turned to gold. Hence we seek to define wealth and money-making in different ways; and we are right in doing so, for they are different; on the one hand true wealth, in accordance with nature, belonging to household management, productive; on the other money-making, with no place in nature, belonging to trade and not productive of goods in the full sense. In this kind of money-making, in which coined money is both the end pursued in the transaction and the medium by which the transaction is performed, there is no *limit* to the amount of [private, particular] riches to be got. [Emphasis added][72]

In that context, discussions concerning the proper organisation of production or trade are for Aristotle undertaken not, as in capitalist political economy, so as to show how ever greater surpluses can be realised through more efficient management, but rather to show how a better life or more beautiful things can be provided.

For Aristotle, economic formations can be divided into two types according to their governing end: economies producing use values or consumption goods broadly understood (*oikonomike,* the art of the household economy) and those in which the economy is driven by the (in principle *unlimited*) search after surplus value or profit (*chrematistike*, the art of acquiring money).

The former was schematised later by Marx as C-M-C (or its earlier variable - for example, C-C (barter), or C, a completely autarkic economy (self contained production /consumption economy without exchange of any sort), and the latter as M-C-M'.[73] This way of conceiving the precapitalist economy with its emphasis on use (consumption) as the end of economic activity, Marx adapted from Aristotle and above all from the *Politics*, Book I, in which is set forth with unmatched clarity the *oikos* model of the economy. Aristotle writes

> The practice of exchange of goods did not exist in the earliest form of association, the household; it only came in with the larger forms. Members of a single household

> shared all the belongings of that house. But members of different households shared many of the belongings of other houses also. Mutual need of the different goods was the essential basis of exchange…But they do not carry the process any farther than this; it remains one of barter.[74]

The idea of the household economy offers a glimpse into a world in which the economy was put to the rational service of human ends and in which it was their needs and not the uncontrolled, autonomous workings of the market that shaped relations between persons.

That *oikos* economy can be described in general terms as an exchangeless hierarchical community dedicated to providing the material prerequisites of the good life for the household's free members, and the master foremost among them. The essential principles of the *oikos* (marketless) household economy, governed by the community, could be and were extended to a vision of the good economy at the level of the city. This suggests that the *oikos* model can be employed in two rather different ways, according to which part of it one emphasises: either a marketless command economy, or an economy subordinated to the purposes of the community (a use-value economy), but which does not necessarily exclude markets.

The second form of exchange relations (C-M-C) was a development out of the more primitive barter (C-C), and was mediated by money. One commodity was exchanged for money (C-M) and the money in turn for another commodity (M-C). Aristotle thought that the introduction of money as a means to an end but not as an end in itself was a development in the

process of exchange and had certain benefits.

> What money does for us is to act as a guarantee of exchange in the future: that if it is not needed now, it will take place if the need arises…So money acts as a measure which, by making things commensurable, enables us to equate them.[75]

It must be pointed out while Aristotle treats C-M-C or production for exchange, as "not its [production's] proper or peculiar use", he also views it as "necessary and laudable" because its main aim is rational- the satisfaction of human needs. Interchange of this kind is not contrary to nature and is not a form of moneymaking; it keeps to its original purpose – to re-establish nature's own equilibrium of self-sufficiency. All the same it was out of it that moneymaking arose.[76]

Aristotle reveals that the *telos* of C-M-C (*oikonomike*) was to develop into the un-natural M-C-M' (*chrematistike*) or *kapelike* (hucksterism, commercial trade, acquisition) and further again to the incestuous M-M' (*tokos*) – the making of money out of money.[77]

At the beginning of Chapter 9 he traces the development of this new phenomenon: from C-C, to C-M-C, to M-C-M', and finally to M-M'. *Kapelike,* unlike *oikonomike's* and *chrematistike's* rational fulfilling of human needs, involves people entering the market not to sell what they have produced in order to buy what they need, but rather to buy (M-C) in order to sell for a profit (C-M'). M-C-M', while involved in buying and selling—like

C-M-C—develops into something alien, without a natural end or *telos* (M-C-M').

> There is another kind of property-getting, to which the term moneymaking is generally and quite rightly applied; and it is due to it that there is thought to be no limit to wealth or its acquisition. Because it closely resembles that form of acquisition which we have been discussing, many suppose that the two are one and the same. But they are not the same…one is natural, the other is not.[78]

The final form of development of exchange-value, and the most unnatural for Aristotle is usurer's interest (*tokos*) – making money out of money (M-M'). Aristotle writes,

> Money-making then…is of two kinds; one which is necessary and acceptable, which we may call administrative; the other, the commercial, which depends on exchange, is justly regarded with disapproval, since it arises not from nature but from men's dealings with each other. Very much disliked also is the practice of charging interest; and the dislike is fully justified, for interest is a yield arising out of money itself, not a product of that for which money was provided. Money was intended to be a means of exchange, interest represents an increase in the money itself. We speak of it as a yield, as a crop or a litter; for each animal produces its like and interest on

> money is produced out of money. Hence of all ways of getting wealth this is the most contrary to nature.[79]

With the emergence of a society founded on exchange, money becomes the bond between individuals. This was a watershed move from use-value, need-orientated economies -- C-M-C or its variants -- to an exchange-value, unlimited accumulation of surplus-value economy, M-C-M', to its culmination in finance capital, M-M'. The original difference between use-value and exchange-value develops into the difference between the *oikos* and chrematistics.

Marx took this manner of understanding capitalism from Aristotle, and especially from his idea of the chrematistic life, *chrematistike* (the art of acquiring money wealth), which Aristotle contrasts to *oikonomike* (the art of household management) with a view to its usefulness to the higher end, living well (*eu zen*).

However, the *oikos* economy, while regulated by human intention and not by the anarchic market, was at its core a despotic community since its purposiveness resided in the master and his needs. In relation to those ends, the other members of the household were objects of exploitation, from the wife down to the slave who was a thing, not a person.

Also it could be criticised for the lack of incentive for technological innovation. Ironically enough this was caused by the rejection of *pleonexia* (the mad Midaslike pursuit of money wealth instead of the good), for while the Greeks knew of the liberating potential of technology, because of slavery

they had neither economic nor moral imperatives to seek it out.

The despotism of the ancient *oikos* economy can be understood to have been a consequence not of the search for ever greater productivity or surpluses, but rather of the emancipation of some members from the grim world of the provisioning of humankind. Thus radical inequality and unfreedom were intimately bound up with the oikos economy.

The destruction of the C-M-C type economies and their replacement by a capitalist one can be viewed as the material prerequisites in which the growth of labour-replacing technology could, if put under rational (human) control and based on human need, provide for the needs of all humankind. Marx held that this would be a higher form of community or ontological justice -- one it which an economy of moral human relations would again be consciously embedded and contained, only now in a form which would not require nor even tolerate social hierarchy or despotism.

2.4 Natural Law

Aristotle's "economics" is an integral part of a general natural law theory of what human relations should be. It sees justice as inherent in rationality, and in human nature, as essential to human nature, and necessary to rationality. That which is naturally right is universal, and recognised as valid by any rational mind. It has everywhere the same force, quite apart from any positive law that may embody it. As Aquinas, working in the same tradition, argued, an unjust law is a contradiction in terms; it does not belong to law, but to acts of violence. A positive legal norm which conflicts with the natural law can impose no obligation, though the state may have the physical power

to impose it.

This is in contrast to the modern rights approach of Hobbes, which, like that of the sophists, is relativist. Marx is critical of Hobbes's "Robinsonade" is on the grounds that its abstract view of human nature was that of atomic individuals isolated from society; values are *relative* to their *particular* wills, the good being reducible to their particular *pleasure*. As has been pointed out in 1.1 Hobbes puts it, "Whatsoever any man desires that is it which he for his part calls good."

These differing attitudes to relativism depend on different basic philosophies of law assumed by each. Law is seen by one as based on universal reason, by the other as based on force, command or particular will. There are corresponding differences in the understanding of key philosophical terms such as nature, reason, justice and rights.

It is the key thesis of the natural law tradition that law is based on an understanding of nature by universal reason; hence there are certain principles of natural law or justice which exist quite independently of the positive law of any particular state, such as Rome or Athens. Because such laws are based on reason and are concerned with human well-being or flourishing and growth they place all people under a moral obligation, for example not to perform certain types of actions. This tradition does not believe that justice is simply a matter of convention, relative to a particular community (Athenian justice, Roman justice). Justice is not what the positive or civil law of a particular society happens to be, nor is it created by an act of human volition or will. The idea of justice is eternal and

unchangeable and in this sense is prior to law – in other words law is derived from eternal justice. The Stoic philosopher Cicero summarises this approach.

> True law is right reason in agreement with nature. It is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting...it is a sin to try to alter this law, nor is it allowable to attempt to repeal any part of it, and it is impossible to abolish it entirely. We cannot be freed from its obligations by senate or people, and we need not look outside of ourselves for an expounder or interpreter of it. And there will not be different laws at Rome and Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and all times.[80]

The last claim is the most ambiguous in this formulation. It would be sufficient to say that a natural law philosophy will hold that sound moral reasoning, whether on the part of an individual or a group, can claim universality, and can criticise any human positive law. Of course different states may choose different social practices and institutions: regulating traffic to drive on the right or the left is not a moral choice but an open option for any state. But most other institutions and practices, such as notably private property, are subject to moral evaluation and judgement. Aquinas for instance, referring to Isidore of Seville, claims that freedom and common ownership are of the natural law, but that *servitudo* and private property (understood in an Aristotelian sense of trusteeship, and not a Lockean bourgeois sense) can be "added" to the natural law. [81] This claim

might be open to moral dispute in the era of globalisation, and perhaps even in Thomas's time.

Aquinas who is expressly in the same tradition as Aristotle views justice as both a natural need, and a rational principle to be discovered. This would be a process whereby our idea or thoughts about justice become better, truer, and higher. This is a process of flourishing (*eudaimonia*) where we become actually what we are potentially. We become truly human; we realise our essence by attaining rationality (spirituality). This approach can aptly be described as humanism. McCarthy in *Marx and Classical Antiquity* identifies the same perfectionism in Marx and Aristotle.

> There are more secondary sources that favourably compare Marx's and Aristotle's theory of social justice with their rejection of utilitarian and natural rights theory, their stress on the ultimate ethical and political values of friendship, mutual caring, rationality, and human dignity, their theories of human need and self-realisation, their underlying metaphysics and teleology of activity and potentiality, and their epistemological assumptions about subjectivity and objectivity. For both men, it is in the perfectibility of mankind that the potentiality of the democratic imagination lies.[82]

2. 5 Aquinas on Law: Divine, Eternal, Natural and Human Positive.

A necessary element of natural law is the orientation toward the objective common good for human beings, based on an adequate grasp of human nature. The natural law became the foundation of the Christian conception of history in the Middle Ages. Thomas's theory of natural law is an interpretation of man's nature and of his relation to God and to the universe. For him natural law is unintelligible unless we realise its close link with the eternal divine order on which the whole of creation rests.[83]

In Thomistic philosophy man is called to participate intellectually and actively in the rational order of the universe, because of his rational nature. For Thomas reason is the essence of man, the divine spark that makes for his greatness. It is the "light of natural reason" which enables us to discern good from evil. Thomas's notion of the light of reason goes back to Platonic and Augustinian sources and he uses it in a humanist sense. His conception of natural law is an expression of the dignity and power of man and can be aptly described as a humanism. He writes

> This participation in the Eternal law by rational creatures is called the Natural law...the light of natural reason, by which we discern good from evil and which is the natural law.[84]

Every part is ordered to the whole as the imperfect is to the perfect. The individual is part of a perfect whole that is the community. Therefore law must concern itself in particular with the happiness of the community.[85]

For Thomas law is "a promulgated rational ordination to the common good by one who has charge of the community". He does not base the law on the Divine Right of Kings which is a Renaissance and not a mediaeval concept. In fact he argues from the fundamentally democratic or populist principle that

> to order anything to the common good belongs either to the whole people or to someone who is the vicegerent of the whole people. And therefore the making of law belongs either to the whole people or to a public personage who has care of the whole people...[86]

Law should have reason as its rule and measure and therefore we are obliged to respect it in order to attain happiness, which for Aquinas is the end to which all human beings are destined. He holds that man necessarily desires his own happiness. This is also what God wants for each and every one of us.

Humankind is a universal community or cosmopolis. Law is for Thomas its expression, being based upon the common nature of humanity; thus it is truly universal. This universal law is eternal and immutable. All the laws of nature and all the laws of society or morality should be considered as different cases of one single law, divine law. This law like God Himself is eternal.

Thus the name given to the first law which is the source of all other laws is eternal law. The eternal law is the eternal reason of God. The Creator has an exemplar idea of mankind and his nature and in his divine wisdom directs man back to Himself through man's participation in the eternal law. The eternal law then, is the origin and font of the natural law, which participates in the eternal law.

Man, as a rational creature, has the strict duty of knowing what the eternal law exacts of him and should conform to it. This might be an insoluble problem, were this law not in some way written in our very substance, so Aquinas says that we have only to observe our nature attentively in order to discover it. Eternal law is thus shared by each one of us, and is found written in our nature.

Because the natural law is founded on human nature itself, we cannot be ignorant of its basic principles; however, we may fail to understand the natural law fully. Human beings are not infallible; we are subject to the vicissitudes of ignorance, error, clouded judgements and coercion. If we are to arrive at sound judgement and sound living and wish to avoid serious error, then we need a norm (morality, or law) in order to achieve our final goal - happiness; this norm is the natural law.

But the law of nature is not the only law which guides man on his way to happiness and perfection. Other laws are necessary. Human laws must draw out all the conclusions of natural law. All law, eternal and natural, human and divine, is linked together in a complete coherent system. However, human law has no principle of its own to invoke. It is strictly limited to

defining ways of applying natural law. Human laws aim at prescribing the natural law to individuals for the common good. These human laws only bind in the degree to which they are just.

Thomas recognised that not all men have the ability, time, patience or inclination to understand fully the natural law and to this end he tells us that this is why God gave us the Divine positive law as was handed to Moses in the form of the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments).[87]

Natural law should be not only the foundation of morality and of all social and political institutions, but also the paramount standard by which these institutions could be judged. The community must be based on justice, and justice as disclosed to man in the precepts of natural law must prevail over any other command or authority. So if positive law contradicts the natural law it must be considered null and void.[88] This means that allegiance to the state can be only conditional. Unjust laws are not properly laws at all. They do not, in consequence, oblige in conscience. It could be argued that the same applies to class rule, which is the dictates of a mode of production.

Man is bound to obey secular rulers to the extent that the order of justice requires. For this reason if such rulers have no just title to power, but have usurped it, or if they command things to be done which are unjust, their subjects are not obliged to obey them, except perhaps in certain special cases, when it is a matter of the virtue of prudence (*phronesis*).[89]

So in certain cases, disobedience may be not only a possibility, but a duty; a theory of resistance can be built up on such premises. Lord Acton claims that

this possibility makes Aquinas "the first Whig".[90] This is a serious misunderstanding; the first Whig was Locke, whose theory was based on the practically unlimited right of property.

For Thomas, the order in which the commands of natural law are ranged corresponds to our nature. Here there are three stages. The first stage is that due to our very nature we necessarily desire to preserve our own being. Natural law plays a part here by maintaining and defending the elementary requirement to preserve human life. Secondly, through our nature we share with other animals an inclination towards certain things, for instance the coupling of male and female and the bringing up of children which Cicero says nature has taught all animals. Thirdly, humankind is utterly distinct from other animals, while having certain similarities to them, as we alone possess reason. Other animals tend towards their nature without knowing it, whereas humans on the contrary have the ability to be conscious of their nature. Because of our ability to reason we have a natural inclination to know the truth especially to know the truths about God and to live in society. "Natural inclinations" here does not mean a mechanical disposition, but specifies an orientation towards a goal whose attainment fulfils our nature.

Thomas draws a parallel between the basic precepts of natural law for practical reason and the axioms of science for theoretical reason. Theoretical reason enables us to discern self-evident propositions, for instance the law of non-contradiction. These propositions are true in themselves and need no further clarification; there is no room for mistakes here as these propositions are essential to all reasoning. But theoretical reasoning, because it deals with contingency, is more liable to make mistakes, the further it gets down to

particular cases. So Thomas cautions us to "act intelligently". The more you descend into the detail the more it appears how the general rule admits of exceptions, so that you have to hedge it with cautions and qualifications.[91]

For Aquinas the first and general precept of natural law is "good is to be done and pursued and bad avoided". This he believes is a self-evident principle like the principle of non-contradiction.

Thomas starts from the likeness of human nature to the divine nature. He says that understanding and free will are the most essential marks that distinguish man from every other earthly creature. It is precisely through these that man is in a special degree the image and likeness of God. The use of analogy here as elsewhere in his work is a key feature in his philosophy. For him the whole of being, though altogether different from the Divine Being, is an image of God and a participation in it. This ranges from the merely inanimate being of inorganic nature up to man, who, as we have seen, Thomas argues is created by God after His own image.

The Thomistic conception of natural law however, views law as a mediatory element between God and man, and an assertion of the power and dignity of human reason and human nature. For Thomas law is not the imposition of arbitrary will; it is the outcome of reason -- law is an act of the intellect. Natural law for him is not a detailed code but a general guide to reasonableness in action. Law is not there to make men obedient, but to help them to be happy or fulfilled (virtuous). However, the close association of morals and law is the distinguishing mark of the natural law throughout its long history. The modern notion sees the older doctrine as the contamination

of legality with morality -- a "moralisation" of law.

Man's good is to be in accord with reason. And inversely, whatever is contrary to reason is evil. Each thing's good is what is suited to it in view of its form. Each thing's evil is whatever contradicts this form and tends consequently to destroy its order. Since man's form is his rational soul itself, every act conforming to reason must be called good and every act contrary to it called evil. Thus when a human act includes something contrary to the order of reason, it by that very fact falls into the species of bad action. In this way, for example, theft is a bad action because it consists in taking possession of another's goods.

For Thomas it is virtue that determines the goodness of a human act. But moral virtue cannot exist without intellectual virtue, for the structure of the human act involves the deliberation and judgement of reason. What we find here is that intellectual virtue needs moral virtue to decide not only what has to be done, but how we ought to do it.[92] It is not enough merely to decide to act well. We must also judge well. For man to act well not only must his appetite be well disposed by the habit of moral virtue, but his reason must be well disposed by the habit of intellectual virtue.[93]

For Thomas our knowledge of natural law unites both morals and politics. Similarly, moral and political philosophy, epistemology and ontology cohere in a unity of philosophical knowledge. He believes that we must act in conformity with our rational nature. For rational nature constitutes the ontological criterion of man's "oughtness". It is through this free realisation and development that we become human - free and rational beings.

Thomistic morality is, accordingly, a naturalism. But it is by that very fact a rationalism because reason acts as its rule. He believes that humans as rational beings must find out what we are so that we may act accordingly. Here the command to become what we are is the highest law: so that we may actualise to the ultimate limits, the potentialities of the rational beings that we are.[94]

Justice, fortitude and temperance with all the particular virtues related to them are for Thomas the means by which we acquire within ourselves, by patient exercise and practical wisdom (*phronesis*), an ever more perfect image of God, which it is our end to become.

Justice is as Aristotle said a kind of general virtue (*right*-eousness), which includes all other virtues. Like the other virtues, justice must be interiorised (like Plato's idea of the just individual ruled by reason in the just state ruled by reason). Before being just in the polis (the state) we must be just in our own selves.

2.6 Mediaeval Economy.

It may be appropriate to take a quick look at the mediaeval economy, to illustrate the practice thought to be entailed by the natural law. It was of the essence of the mediaeval economy, as it was of the mediaeval polity, that it was seen as derived from and subject to the natural law. The law of nature or natural law is invoked by mediaeval writers such as Aquinas as a moral restraint upon economic self-interest. The unpardonable sin is that of the

speculator or the middleman, who snatches private gain by the exploitation of public necessities. For the mediaevals no one may ask more than a just price, fixed by either common estimation or public authorities. However, even just prices can vary with supply and demand; but they will not vary greatly to exploit individual necessity or favour individual opportunity.

The intense economic activity of the Middle Ages contained the seeds of an intellectual revolution. Mediaeval opinion had no objection to rent or profits provided that they were "reasonable". No one might charge money for a loan. One might of course take the profits of partnership provided that one took the partner's risks. One might demand compensation -'interest' - if one is not repaid the principle sum at the time stipulated; one might ask payment corresponding to any loss one incurs or gain one forgoes; and one might even purchase an annuity, for the payment is contingent and speculative, not certain.

Social institutions assumed a character which may almost be called sacramental, for they were seen as the outward expression of a spiritual reality. Society's stability was thought to be due to its straining upwards to the celestial order of which it is the dim reflection. However, the fifteenth century saw an outburst of commercial activity and of economic speculation, and by the middle of it all this teaching was becoming antiquated. Florence was the financial capital of mediaeval Europe; but even at Florence the secular authorities in the middle of the fourteenth century fined bankers for usury, then fifty years later firstly prohibited it altogether, and then, imported Jews to carry out the work that Christians were forbidden to do.

What remained unlawful to the end was what appears in modern economic textbooks as "pure interest" -- interest as a fixed payment stipulated in advance for a loan of money or wares without risk to the lender. The essence of usury was that it was certain that whether the borrower gained or lost the usurer took his money. For the schoolmen condoning usury would have created a scandal, for it is contrary to Scripture, it is contrary to Aristotle, it is contrary to nature; it is to live without labour, it is to sell time which belongs to God and it is to rob those to whom the money is lent.

However it must be remembered that whole ranges of financial activity escaped the mediaeval denunciation of usury almost altogether. It was rarely applied to the large-scale transactions of kings, feudal magnates, bishops and abbots. It was even more rarely applied to the Papacy, Popes regularly employed banking houses with an indifference to the morality of their business methods. The Papacy was in a sense the greatest financial institution of the Middle Ages and as its fiscal system became more elaborate, things became worse and not better. The abuses which were a trickle in the thirteenth century became a torrent in the fifteenth. So the then 'international' money markets escaped the teaching on usury; fourteenth century Italy was full of banking houses doing foreign exchange business with every commercial centre from Constantinople to London.

This discrepancy was not viewed as hypocrisy because the teaching on usury was based on a different order of economic activity than that of the loans from great banking houses to the merchants; the writers and re-writers of the doctrine were perfectly well aware that neither commerce nor government could be carried on without credit. The teaching on usury was simple and

direct -- to prevent the well-to-do moneylender from exploiting the peasants and craftsmen. So while a blind eye was turned to those in high places the Church's scheme of economic ethics had been worked out to protect those at greatest risk. It was enforced partly by secular authorities and partly by ecclesiastical discipline. No individual or society under pain of excommunication was to let houses to usurers, they were to be refused confession, absolution and Christian burial, until they had made restitution and their wills were to be invalid. However, practically the Church was an immense vested interest, implicated to the hilt in the economic fabric, especially on the side of agriculture and land tenure, as it was itself the greatest of landowners. The persecution of the Spiritual Franciscans who dared in defiance of the bull of John XXII, to maintain St. Francis's vow of evangelical poverty, suggests that the teachings of Francis against economic wealth resembled too closely the teaching of Christ for the princes of the Church.

However, the Church endorsed the theory that the lands of the Middle Ages were of common domain. The serfs for instance had the right to use them for the satisfaction of their needs; they could gather firewood, hunt, fish and graze their animals etc. This meant that many were able to free themselves as a class from their serfdom. When the common lands were converted into modern private property the serfs were excluded from the use of what was formerly theirs. As Joseph Ferraro says

> According to the principles held by St. Thomas, the social order promoted by the modern Church is not a juridical order properly speaking; it is rather an institutional

> violence against the poor. What the modern Church considers as the order established by God, St. Thomas would hold to be against and in contradiction with that order.[95]

With the rise of bourgeois society people were bereft of the social relations and institutions which were characteristic of feudal society; these were replaced with institutions based on the simple view of humans as economically motivated, intent on maximising their own interests. Marx defines this view in his assessment of Bentham as "a genius in the way of bourgeois stupidity" who takes "the modern shopkeeper, especially the English shopkeeper, as the normal man". He similarly criticises Proudhon for viewing competition as "a necessity of the human soul".

By the seventeenth century a significant revolution takes place. "Nature" comes to connote, not Aristotle's teleological *physis,* but appetitive and aggressive competition. Natural rights (Hobbes's freedom of the "state of nature") are invoked by the individualism of the age as a reason why self-interest should be given free play. The fundamental difference between mediaeval and modern economic thought is that the former starts from the position that there is a moral authority to which considerations of economic expediency must be subordinated, whereas the latter normally refers to economic expediency. The community-oriented virtues, not only of Plato and Aristotle and of the medievals but also as is now widely recognised of Marx, are not compatible with bourgeois modernism which is connected with the needs of the atomic individual of the capitalist class. The emerging

bourgeois world ushered in the ending of limitations to the rights of property, and the abolition of notions of the just price; it also turned upside down the teaching on usury which was part of the Church's potential restraining influence on the power of the owners of commercial wealth which made it to some extent an inheritor of the Platonic ideal of philosopher rulers.

Chapter 3. Modern Natural Rights As Opposed to Natural Law.

3.1 Hobbes and the English Tradition: Natural Right as Negative Freedom

Modernist moral and political thought generally is a return from the classical and mediaeval Platonic tradition to a sophistic position. The Hobbesian social contract is a return to the sophistic account of justice as convention. The assumptions which underlay the sophistic theories of Plato's day underlie all the typical modern moral and political theories -- from utilitarianism to Rawls.

In Hobbes's state of nature there exist only lawless individuals, in whom there is no natural tendency to live in society; and man's life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short".[96] For him the fear of violent death expresses most forcefully the most powerful and the most fundamental of all natural desires, the initial desire, the desire for self-preservation.[97]

He conceived of the good life in terms of man's beginnings or man's "natural right" (i.e. the supposed natural right to do whatever you want – kill, rape etc.) as distinguished from duty or perfection or virtue. According to Hobbes, all virtues and duties arise from the concern with self-preservation alone and hence immediately from calculation.[98] Hence Hobbes's already noted relativist concept of goodness: "whatsoever is the object of any man's appetite or desire, that is it which he for his part calleth good: and the object of his hate and aversion, evil".[99]

In contradiction to Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics and Aquinas, the Hobbesian notion of misnamed "natural law" would see "positive" human law as a necessary correction to our nature as "wolf to man". Here human law is not seen as a necessary complement to the natural law; rather it is seen as necessary to overcome what is, for Hobbes, the law that we find in nature, "the war of all against all". As d'Entreves and Rommen point out, contrary to the opinions of A. E. Taylor[100] and Howard Warrender[101], Hobbes's is not a natural law theory at all, but its rejection. Its revolutionary bourgeois asocial, egoistic and selfish view of human nature is antithetical to that of Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas. Hobbes's view of reason is also antithetical to theirs; it is only an instrument or tool of the passions. Justice is merely a convention, pact, deal, an insurance policy which we would rather not have, but which we had the better have. George McCarthy makes a pertinent point revealing the differences in these two approaches to justice.

> Aristotle begins his investigation into the nature of ethics and social justice in his *Nicomachean Ethics* by first raising the question of the ultimate end or final good of

> human life, or what he calls *eudaimonia* (happiness). This question is far removed from the question of self-interest and pleasure of the seventeenth-century possessive individualism of Hobbes and Locke or the eighteenth-century utilitarianism of Bentham.[102]

As I have the pointed out in the introduction the basis of Hobbes's position on justice is the relativist one that "Whatsoever any man desires, that is it which he for his part calls good".[103] This is a denial of the notion of objective universal rational good, and the reduction of good to pleasure. For him there are no essential or objective defining properties of goodness; rather it is merely subjective, and relative to what pleases an individual. What Hobbes does is to remove the normative (moral) and virtuous dimension of the word – all that goodness amounts to is the attractive, satisfying or pleasant, instead of what it really should (and rightly, dialectically, does) mean: the true, beautiful, moral, just, right, noble, honourable, rational and even divine. Leo Strauss describes this as Hobbes's political hedonism; he writes that for Hobbes

> the good is fundamentally identical with the pleasant; virtue is therefore not choiceworthy for its own sake but only with a view to the attainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain...sensual pleasures are, as such, preferable to honour or glory.[104]

The inevitable consequence is the theory of the natural state as one of universal war, in which the cardinal virtues are force and fraud. Since the

law of nature is war, the only motivation for Hobbes's retaining for justice the title "law of nature" is the traditional prestige of that title. Hobbes recognises that it is not even properly called law at all, since is only a recipe for self-defence, whereas for Hobbes law properly speaking is the command of a sovereign. That aspect of the title is rescued by Hobbes on the grounds that the "natural law" does happen to be commanded by God.

What Hobbes means by the natural law is stated in the first and second precepts. The first precept, or general rule of the law of nature is, "that every man ought to endeavour peace, as far as he has hope of obtaining it; and when he cannot obtain it that he may seek, and use, all helps and advantages of war".[105] From this can be derived the second law "that a man be willing, when others are so too, as far-forth, as for peace, and defence of *himself* (my emphasis) he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself".[106] In essence what Hobbes is describing here is a Wild West scenario, where you leave your guns at the door, as long as everybody else does so, but once somebody starts shooting then you can use your concealed weapon too.

Hobbes makes the false claim that this is essentially equivalent to "that law of the Gospel, whatsoever you require that others should do to you, that do ye to them".[107] On close inspection this is obviously not true; the Gospel's unconditional version of the Golden Rule is to love our neighbour as ourselves. This can be clearly seen in the Sermon on the Mount; but Socrates also speaks in a vein strikingly similar to that of the Sermon on the Mount in the *Gorgias* where he counsels Callicles to accept slaps on the face.

Also it is worth noting that for Hobbes the first principle is 'seek peace': by this he presupposes war. This makes morality and justice solely a means for attaining peace; that goal could in theory be secured by genocide; you can achieve peace by killing everybody. Tacitus famously said that the Romans make a desert and call it peace.

Hobbes also provides us with the failed enthymeme that injustice can never lead to peace since "war can never preserve life, nor peace destroy it".[108] At first sight this seems logical, but there is actually an equivocation between peace and life. The central concept is also an empty abstraction: the kind of war, like the kind of peace, needs defining. This abstract characterisation of war and peace by Hobbes is in fact false, since in some cases war does preserve life and peace destroy it. The war against the Nazis saved the lives of countless Jews, whereas the peaceful submission of other Jews resulted in their deaths.

The necessity for the positive theory of law is argued by Hobbes as a matter of correcting humanity's 'mere nature'. In positing the social contract he accepts the view that man is by nature or originally an a-political animal, as well as the premise that the good is simply identical with the particular pleasant. This theory whose claim to natural law is disputable has no recourse to the higher, older Natural Law. It reinforced private property and atomistic self-seeking egoism (a-social, pre-social, anti-social) and possessiveness. Thus it became in the hands of Hobbes a gross caricature of the older tradition of natural law; he nevertheless continued to call it Natural Law.[109]

Hobbes held that reason is unable to know universal truths, ideas or forms. Words denoting universal concepts are mere names. In moral philosophy he believed that the passions hold first place. Reason finds itself obliged to act as an instrument or tool of the passions. It merely calculates means to the end of satisfying selfish desires.

A. P. d'Entreves in his book *Natural Law* states that the modern theory of natural law was not "properly speaking, a theory of law at all. It was a theory of rights".[110] He argues that the confusion was created by Hobbes and his anarchical conception of "natural right" as opposed to natural law. For the medieval, natural law was the necessary presupposition of natural right -- there is only a subjective right (*jus*) in as much as there is a law (*lex*) deriving from objective right (*jus,* based on right reason, *orthos logos*, *recta ratio*). A's natural *subjective* right corresponds to B's duty in *objective* right. Hobbes implicitly denies this and rejects the idea that the word *jus* could be used in an objective as well as in a subjective sense. The *jus naturale* of the modern political philosopher is now no longer the *lex naturalis* of the medieval moralist or the *jus naturale* of the Roman lawyer. As Hobbes states

> though they that speak of this subject use to confound *ius* and *lex*, rights and law: yet they ought to be distinguished; because Right consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear: whereas Law determineth, and bindeth to one of them: so that law and right differ as much, as obligation and liberty.[111]

With Hobbes and also Locke[112] the emphasis is shifted more and more from the objective meaning of right to the subjective. This was something that the great majority of natural law lawyers, philosophers and writers would previously not have accepted. The lawyers who had been brought up in the study of natural law had carefully distinguished between objective and subjective right -- between the rule of action and the right to act or to receive just treatment. Unlike Hobbes they had never held that the two meanings of *jus* are antithetical, but had seen them as correlative -- right always presupposes, derived from and corresponds to law. This difference is crucial if we are to understand the full implications of the modern natural rights theory.

What Hobbes attempted to do was to maintain the name of natural law but to divorce it from the Aristotelian teleological idea of man's perfection.[113] What he presents us with here is the extreme Protestant theory of man's total depravity caused by original sin -- our fallen nature -- which he takes as a scientific description of human nature for all time. For Hobbes, man in the depths of his being is what the state of nature shows him to be: "a wolf, wicked, devoted solely to the self".[114]

It may be objected that Hobbes claims that in the state of nature there is no sin, but it is clear that there is killing etc., and that the fact that it is not called wrong is due simply to the fact that there is no law against it.

Leo Strauss explains the break that Hobbes made with tradition:

> It is only since Hobbes that the philosophic doctrine of

> natural law has been essentially a doctrine of the state of nature. Prior to him, the term 'state of nature' was at home in Christian theology rather than political philosophy. The state of nature was distinguished especially from the state of grace, and it was subdivided into the state of pure nature and the state of fallen nature. Hobbes dropped the subdivision and replaced the state of grace by the state of civil society.[115]

From what is for Hobbes the "fundamental and inalienable" right of self-preservation he traces all justice and morality. The fundamental moral fact is not a duty but a right. Duties are binding only to the extent to which their performance does not endanger our self-preservation.[116] With Hobbes there is no obligation to respect or preserve another's rights. By nature there exists only the individual's perfect right and no perfect duty to others. He sees man's nature as aggressive and competitive, fighting it out with others for finite, scarce resources, where the goal of each man is infinite (i.e. indefinite) possessiveness or acquisitiveness: what Aristotle called the vice of *pleonexia*.

Hobbes's view of individual pre-social rights made a decisive break with traditional natural law theory which had a strong element of hierarchy, and where the natural law, and its subordinate positive human law, were derived from the divine eternal law. He inverts the original natural law (which was crystal clear about the relation between law and rights -- there is only a (corresponding) right if there is a law -- by stating that rights are logically prior to the natural law. For Hobbes the natural law is derived from these

rights; it is the antithesis of rights, as command is the antithesis of freedom; it limits freedom; and it exists only to preserve other freedoms (rights).

In the ancient and medieval community the key element of natural law is not individual rights but rather the orientation toward virtue and the objective common good for human beings, based on an adequate grasp of human nature.[117] This battle between a subjective and an objective, an emotional and a rational, a finite and an infinite, a particularist and a universalist conception of goodness has been seen in the Platonic confrontation with the Sophists, which stemmed fundamentally from the Sophists' divorce of being and value (teleology). The foundation of Sophistic thought was that nature, as the rule of the stronger, could not be altered, or judged critically, and this they perceived as the realistic and the rational understanding of the nature of men and gods.[118] Similarly Hobbes states

> The most frequent reason why men desire to hurt each other, ariseth hence, that many men at the same time have an appetite to the same thing; which yet very often they can neither enjoy in common, nor yet divide it; when it follows that the strongest must have it, and who is the strongest is decided by the sword.[119]

Hobbes, the modern sophist, denied that man has a natural inclination toward mutual help and love. For Hobbes love/desire were reduced to the same thing -- covetousness; desire signifying the want of a thing, and love the possession of it.[120]

3.2 The State as the Sole Source of Law: Law as Command or Will.

In order that Hobbes's abstract "peace" may be made possible in spite of our natural inclination to use whatever means we like to grab all that we can (the war of all against all), all contracting parties must yield their rights to the Sovereign -- the state personified -- whether this is organised in a monarchical or democratic manner. Hobbes sees individuals as free of all relations of mutual personal dependence and hence not fit for society, but only for the competitive struggle for existence, unless there is an artificially constructed power to correct and control them -- the Leviathan. This leads to the conclusion that command or will, and not deliberation or reasoning, are the core of sovereignty. For Hobbes, laws are laws by virtue not of truth or reasonableness, but of power alone.[121]

The rise of the modern notion of law is marked by the abandonment of natural law in favour of a "positive" approach. d'Entreves states that this led to "the restriction of all law to positive law".[122] This led to the exclusion of morals from legislation. This destroys the very essence of morality, as moral values were not only excluded from the legally posited law, but were now derived from legal diktat, no longer from a hierarchical, universal, moral, natural, rational law.[123] This is a victory of force over reason, the state and the market[124] becoming the supreme arbiter of moral life.[125]

For Thomas God wills a thing because it is good (rational). Hobbes on the contrary follows Ockham's position that a thing is right because God wills it. As I have pointed out above in 3.1 Hobbes justifies his use of "law" to

characterise what he recognises are only "theorems concerning self-defence" — "called laws it... but improperly" — on the grounds that law is a command, in this case by God. That does not make his position a natural law one in the sense in which Plato's is. Rommen in *The Natural Law* remarks that "Hobbes's doctrine is the theodicy of Ockham secularised,[126] and the extreme consequence of the proposition that law is will".[127] For Ockham the natural moral law is positive law, divine will. An action is not good because of its suitableness to the essential nature of man, but because God wills it. Law as such was separated in a positivist fashion from the eternal law when the natural moral law was made into a positive act of God's absolute will. So for Ockham there exists no unchangeable natural law that governs the positive law; positive law and natural law stand in no inner relationship to each other. The absolute power of God in Ockham's doctrine became at the hands of Hobbes the absolute sovereignty of the Leviathan.

One of Hobbes's purposes in devising his own notion of "natural law" was the destruction of independent ecclesiastical law — forcing the Church into the service of the state. This served to break down the organisation of society as estates and led to the build up of the modern bourgeois social order. C. B. Macpherson illustrates this point

> [A] stronger state is necessary to maintain a capitalist society than is needed to maintain a society in which the social relationships are more obviously personal, or more obviously purposeful, and so more easily understandable. The latter society can be kept going by customary moral codes the strength of which is automatically renewed

> because the relationships are visible and their value is readily perceptible. A capitalist society needs stronger political sanctions. It was Hobbes's supreme merit to see this and to urge it relentlessly.[128]

For Hobbes the source of natural law is the fear of violent death and the urge to render life and property secure. Since for him our nature is bad, thus the state becomes good and its positive will becomes the supreme norm of property-securing justice. The original idea of natural law, in contrast, conceived of a movement of the human mind towards an eternal and immutable universal justice. This justice is conceived as being the higher or ultimate law, which proceeds from the nature of the universe, and from the Being of God and the reason of man.[129]

For Hobbes however the law has its source only in the absolute will of the sovereign; the state gives security and protection by monopolising all power and it demands as a price strict obedience and subordination through identification of natural law with positive law. Thus the concept of natural law degenerated from an objective metaphysical idea into a political theory which sought to justify and promote "Sovereignty". The idea of natural law, once the eternal objective norm of all social life, served Hobbes as a means of establishing the absolute rule of the state, property and the market.

3.3 Bourgeois Psychology and "Morality".

C. B. Macpherson in *Democratic Theory* comments of Hobbes that the

> assumptions, explicit and implicit, upon which his psychological conclusions depend are assumptions peculiarly valid for bourgeois society.[130]

What Hobbes attempted to do was to read back into man the contentious, competitive behaviour, which he found in bourgeois society. Hobbes attempts to universalise the particular - he takes man's *particular* alienated life under capitalism and makes it humankind's *universal* nature. All relations between humans take on the relations of the market – "The value, or Worth of a man, is as of all other things, his Price".[131] Now, human relations are largely determined by our relation to capital. This crudely reduces the relations between the individuals in society from mutual aid and co-operation to the relations of units competing in an individualist struggle for place and power in the "free and equal" market.

This raises the vitally important theoretical question as to whether modern "morality" is morality at all. Macpherson asserts that

> Hobbes's morality is essentially a bourgeois morality. When this is followed back it can be seen that Hobbes's analysis of human nature, from which his whole political theory is derived, is really an analysis of bourgeois

man.[132]

So Hobbes's picture may be called an unpleasantly accurate analysis not of man as such, but of market man (*homo economicus*) since the rise of bourgeois society. For Hobbes morality is derived from nature as seen after the fall and not from our original Edenic nature. He does not allow for redemption, the return to our original good nature as the older tradition does. That tradition viewed morality as a means to recovering our true nature whereas for Hobbes morality is not natural or rational (in the spiritual sense). Hobbes's morality is served by purely instrumental reason, calculating the best way to insure the interests of particular individuals or groups.[133]

A. MacIntyre in *A Short History of Ethics*[134] tells a story about Hobbes being seen giving alms to a poor man. When Hobbes was asked would he have done it if Christ had not commanded it, Hobbes replied that he would have because not only did it please the poor man but also it pleased him to see the poor man pleased.[135]

Hobbes attempts to found the law of nature on a particularist psychology in which the fear of death, and desire for power and commodious living are the main natural drives. These he believes are the causes of all our actions and should be the criterion of law. For Hobbes our nature is mechanical; our actions are caused by self-interest alone – the pursuit of pleasure, profit, and power, in a mechanical manner which cannot be changed. It is worth noting that this is equivalent to the causal, mechanical relations found in the bourgeois market - buyer to seller, capitalist to worker.[136] These causal relations are, he believes, as natural as are those of physics, and as such can

be described in a scientific (Galilean) way. Human nature mechanically causes possessive, selfish aggressive, competitive behaviour. Human nature causes us to compete and fight with each other for material gain and pleasure -- for him this is a necessity and "natural". But Hobbes clearly overlooks the fact that it is usually reasons and not causes which must be sought in the explanation of human actions. He does this by maintaining that self-interest alone is the cause of action and in so doing he rules out the full gamut of reasons for human behaviour, including love, concern and need and also self-denial and self-control and justice. Furthermore, the desire for power etc. is themselves reasons for acting and not causes at all. As reasons they must stand up to rational scrutiny, which cannot be reduced to casual explanation. Watkins comments that

> self-preservation or the avoidance of wounds and destruction is an egocentric end dictated by a man's biological-cum-psychological make-up, this implies that Hobbes's laws of nature do not have a distinctively moral character...[but]...Hobbes speaks of them as 'moral' laws.[137]

Indeed Hobbes's first principle "endeavour peace" is not moral at all. It really turns out to mean that we should maintain our physical survival by handing up some of our pre-social natural rights to the state so that we may obtain our individual pleasure in commodious living. So Hobbes is in fact not a moralist or a natural law philosopher at all but rather a bourgeois apologist - a gross materialist.[138] Indeed it would have been the opinion of Kant that while the Hobbesian account of nature was true, enlightenment

should take not this Anglo-French materialist form but the German idealist form of obedience to an autonomous universalising reason. That however as we shall see was very different from the traditional Aristotelian unity of reason and nature.

Locke borrowed from the mediaeval tradition, especially Aquinas through Bishop Hooker. However he was also strongly influenced by the possessive individualism of Hobbes and transposed Hobbes's contract to the political level, making the state a trustee or even a night-watchman whose only duty is to protect my property in my body, my life, my liberty and my estate. This begins with my natural right to own that with which I have mixed my labour; this is a possessive individualist emphasis within the parameters of Hooker's natural law. We have thus the first theoretical division between the socio-economic natural dimension or sphere and the "rational" political dimension or sphere (in the new sense of rational as profitable, or calculating self-interest). This echoed the factual bourgeois division between the economy as the unlimited use of capital, obeying alleged natural laws, e.g. of supply and demand. This division was later theorised by Hegel as the division between the natural sphere of "civil society" and the spiritual (*geistig*) sphere of "the universal, the ethical", the State. Marx in turn criticised this division (e.g. in "On the Jewish Question").

Hume, the father of positivism, made explicit what was implicit in Hobbes, that reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions. He was attempting to found a "science of man". He thought that he was accomplishing for 'morals' what Newton had recently accomplished for the natural world. Reason, he thought, has nothing to do with ends but is

confined to discovering the means to those ends. For Hume the great discovery of modern morals is that all values are subjective. He insists that there is logically no deduction of an "ought" from an "is". There is a total dichotomy of fact and value; this comes from replacing the view of human nature as having an intrinsic *telos* with a mechanistic model, and also reducing all justification to causal explanation, seeing mechanical causality as the sole source of all explanation.

Hume's theory of science is empiricist; he describes experience as a manifold of impressions. His view of scientific explanation is based on the constant conjunction of experiences. So the object of science is to look for causal explanation, assuming determinism. Causality itself is explained by Hume as a psychological belief due to a constant conjunction of atomic experiences of events. Positivism also decrees that all values come from the wishes or passions of individuals, whose views are simply another fact and cannot be judged by any criteria such as essence or value. Here morality is causally explained as sentiment or feeling, for reason is unable to grasp any values in the nature of things: reason simply follows the dictates of what is 'in our breast' - the passions.

The is/ought, fact/value dichotomy stems from a mechanistic view of human nature and society in which each individual is seen as determined by nature to seek his or her own interests, and as rationally justified only in doing so. This is connected with empiricism -- what is observed or experienced are facts, and not values. For if the universe is a mechanism then there are no objective, rational values -- these are just arbitrary choices. This leads to differing views of the source of morality. For Hume it is "in the breast", but

for him as well as Bentham it is also in utility or pleasure.

Bentham's totally inadequate scientistic reconstruction of morality (it has no place for justice—"talk of rights is nonsense, talk of natural rights is nonsense upon stilts") seeks objectivity in mechanism. "Nature has placed mankind under two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them to determine both what we shall do and what we ought to do". Values are therefore entirely relative, given by desires for pleasure, wants, wishes etc., and therefore cannot be judged from any criterion outside themselves; they are the criterion of rationality. It is foolish (irrational) to do anything which does not lead to my pleasure. This is, in my sense, the height of relativism. For this egoism, community is fictitious; there are only individuals, and they should not be directed towards the universal common good, but only to the greatest pleasure of the greatest number. There is no conflict here between a given egoism and any alleged altruism: there exists only egoism; but a rational organisation of society, including a market and also legislation which is primarily directed to securing a free market, will reconcile competing egoists.

This mechanical model of nature, science and rationality is relativist: its mechanistic ontology and its emotivist epistemology are based on feelings, especially putative sensations of pleasure which are relative to *particular* individuals and do not have the *universality* of thought. This is a complete departure from the Aristotelian or any other realist ontology and epistemology, including a theory of science. For a realist theory, iron rusting is not just a constant conjunction of experiences or events, or the mind ordering the empirical data -- the rather it is an observable, objective, natural

necessity. It is of the nature or essence of iron to rust when exposed to water; this will always happen independently of our mind's recognition of it. This theory of natural necessity counters relativism. It is also critical of Kant's formal logicist view of moral necessity. The realist theory of science, as held for instance by Roy Bhaskar, offers a criticism and an alternative to this kind of scientism.

An Aristotelian style or Gestalt biology or psychology (which derived from Husserl's phenomenology) is a useful corrective to positivism as it makes us see the needs of the organism e.g. nutrition, health, as natural and objective. Gestalt psychology criticises scientism which is positivist. It also criticises the view that the practice of science requires the theory of universal mechanism, by stressing the organic model of much of nature, which is teleological. This is Aristotelian in spirit as opposed to Cartesian. For such thinking, if humans are to flourish then they need justice as plants need water: they also need to be loved and to love. Such an account of needs bridges the division between the "is" and the "ought". It is of the nature of a human being, as Aquinas argues, that the intellect needs total truth, and the will needs total good. The recognition of truth as a good for humans is a practical judgement, but it is also a theoretical one, about the nature of things; the "is" and the "ought" are included in such an insight into human nature.

3. 4 German Idealism: The Failed Dialectic

It is true that Kant's theory of the categorical imperative necessarily rejects Anglo-French enlightenment utilitarianism as expediency and not morality at all. This is an attempt by Kant to rescue morality from mechanism, and to that extent to return to the older tradition of natural law. However, he accepts the Cartesian dichotomy of mind (reason) and mechanistic matter (to which nature is reduced). He develops that into what Marx called "the Christian Germanic dogma of the opposition between spirit and matter".[139]

He also accepts, via Rousseau's social contract, the Lockean concept of economic nature divorced from contractarian politics. The social contract theory in Rousseau's hands is an attempt to raise it up from its empiricist, individualist, hedonist and antagonistic form, which Marx called a Robinsonade, to a universal intellectual and moral level, worthy of human nature as the Stoics for instance had seen it. But as Marx pointed out in a very crucial passage in "On the Jewish Question", Rousseau had to see the social contract as a quasi-miraculous way of raising the modern asocial "natural" being to the height of the social -- a distinction which would have been unintelligible to Aristotle, and was unintelligible to Marx. Marx quotes Rousseau:

> Whoever dares to undertake the founding of a people's institutions must feel himself capable of *changing*, so to speak, *human nature*, of *transforming* each individual, who in himself is a complete and solitary whole, into a *part* of a greater whole...of substituting a *partial* and

> *moral existence* for physical and independent existence. He must take *man's own powers away from him* and substitute for them alien ones… [140]

Against this Marx's reply is:

> Political emancipation is the reduction of man on the one hand to the member of civil society, the *egoistic*, *independent* individual, and on the other to the *citizen*, the moral person… [But] only when man has recognised and organised his *forces propres* as *social forces* so that social force is no longer separated from him in the form of *political* force, only then will human emancipation be completed.

Kant also accepts empiricism as an account of the basis of experience is receptivity to a Humean manifold of impressions. The transcendental mind, however, imposes an order on phenomena i.e. the mind imposes on this flotsam and jetsam "forms of intuition" such as space and time and "categories" such as causality. The manifold of sensations is ordered by the mind. Kant held this to be the source of the objective; the nature of objectivity is transcendental subjectivity. Objectivity does not come from the world; it comes from the mind's imposition of categories. For Kant objective morality also comes from the noumenal realm which is divorced from nature (the phenomenal realm).[141] Morality is therefore not natural; the only meaning Kant could give to "natural inclination" would be "instinct"[142] which would contradict the freedom and autonomy which he sees as

essential to morality. Deprived of natural substance, morality is reduced not only to legalism (for Kant the essence of universality) but, as Hegel argued, to formalism, and I would add, to logicism – the test of a "maxim" is only that it can be universalised without self-contradiction, not any content which has reference to anything in the physical universe, such as human welfare, physical or spiritual.

As a result of this sundering, human positive law is said to no longer have any competence in the "court of conscience" [143]-- in morality -- whereas for Thomas by contrast good laws must be obeyed "for conscience sake".[144] For Thomas, law is inseparable from the moral sphere; moral judgements enable us to decide the goodness or badness of laws. Law is an act of the intellect besides and before being an act of the will.

According to Habermas the Kantian separation of law and morality is an irreversible achievement of modernity. He shares with Kolakowski the fear of Stalinism which they both claim shows that it is good to separate politics from morality – to prevent the stifling of moral opposition to tyrannical state law.[145] This is not a necessary conclusion; as we have seen Acton called Aquinas the first Whig because his natural law theory allows resistance to an unjust state, and even tyranncide. Perhaps Habermas believes that mediaeval thinkers held the -- in fact Renaissance -- theory of the Divine Right of Kings.

For pre-Cartesian philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas, as for some anti-Cartesian philosophers such as Hegel and Marx, reason is dialectical because it points to, and leads to, higher being, whether it be the

Platonic Republic or the unification of the human race in the unalienated mode of production and distribution of communism. The undialectical thought of Hume and Kant led them both to a closure of thought and being; Hume's closed mechanistic account of nature and sceptical epistemology finds a mirror image in Kant, whose position is an equally undialectical closure, that of logical necessity.

Dialectical thinking is diametrically opposed to mechanistic thinking and claims to reach a unifying, totalising and evaluative truth, and not just to understand the causal relations between finite things, or to serve instrumentally and uncritically the atomic individual's desires, wants or cravings (which are to teleological reasoning often irrational or unnatural). There is rationality in the universe, and it contains values which are natural, so to live well we must live by these values. For instance human beings are a natural kind, and it is a matter of knowledge that they do not thrive on either side in concentration camps; similarly they do not thrive in an exploitative system of production which is based on profit. This is a matter of natural necessity; just as we know that water will rust iron. For dialectical thinking there is nothing wrong with instrumental reason as long as the end is right or good and the means genuinely lead to it: mere subjective desires obviously do not always meet these criteria as they may amount only to the selfish desires of particular individuals or groups such as classes, who represent vested interests.

Unlike Aristotle and Marx, empiricists deny essences or natural kinds. This is undialectical and is rejected as anathema by both the pre-Cartesian and the post-Cartesian dialectical tradition. Essentialism constitutes not only a link

between previous dialectical thinkers and Hegel and Marx, but also is the central tenet of both their epistemologies and ontologies.

The Aristotelian teleological approach views reality as a development of potential to achieve the actual, or a development from potency to act. This is an essentialism, in that the essence is the actuality of the potential inherent within the thing; the essence is what the thing truly is and can be. Nature is another term with the same meaning as essence; a thing's nature is also its essence or what it actually is or can be when its potential has been fully developed. This Aristotelian teleological approach of the development of a thing's potentiality so that it can actualise its essence or nature is an important part of both Hegel's and Marx's thought.

Dialectical thought, inseparable from philosophy in classical and mediaeval thought, was abandoned in the dominant schools of early modern philosophy. Kantian dualism, itself a result of Cartesian dualism, provoked the rediscovery of dialectics by thinkers who wished to reconcile the dualism of "is" and "ought" which characterised modern theories of thought (epistemology) and being (ontology).

The thought of Hegel was such an attempt. With his rediscovery and use of the Platonic/Aristotelian/Stoic/neo-Platonic dialectics of ancient times and his praise of Spinoza's thought in modern times, he attempted to overcome the Kantian and other dualisms through the synthesising power of dialectics. Hegel followed Kant's rejection of Anglo-French utilitarianism, but he rejected what he called Kant's formalism and attempted to restore a place for a content in ethics (*Sittlichkeit*) beside Kant's morality (*Moralitaet*).[146] The

goal of the union of form and content was a typical motif of dialectical thinking. Hegel claimed that dialectical reasoning is the intellect's own method for the discovery of truth. Hegel called this Science (*Wissenschaft*). For Hegel the culmination of this process is the establishment of Concrete Universals. The subject and substance are now the same, no longer divided into phenomenal and noumenal realms; the self-consciousness of Spirit has achieved full development and includes and retains within it all that has gone before; in the process the Spirit has enriched itself in its becoming actual.

Hegel believed the Kingdom of Prussia had put an end to man's alienation from self or God. He believed that once man conceives of himself as a spiritual being who is part of an absolute Spirit (*Geist*) he can conceive of himself as God. Human destiny would now be to establish a concrete human divinity. This would come about when the world of actual, concrete existence was understood by Hegelian philosophical insight, ending man's alienation from God. For Hegel the true is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. The Absolute is what it truly is only at the end; it is essentially a result of its own becoming. So the subject is necessarily an expression of the truth of the Absolute (Substance) and becomes identical with the absolute in the Idea's final self-consciousness as *Geist*. It is crucially important to recognise that Hegel also calls this Absolute freedom. For Hegel, Spirit (*Geist*) is constantly actualising itself in this process. The actuality of the development of human history is the process of human history working out all the consequences of the ideas of historical events. It is only through a developmental process that actuality can be gained. Actuality (*Wirklichkeit*) is not simply empirical reality but is based on reason. Actuality is reached

when the idea and mere existence become one.

In *The Philosophy of Right* he claims that philosophers who abstract from actuality build "models out of thin air". Reality consists of both what is actual and what is potential but for him it is only that which is actual which is rational. Much of the criticism of Hegel as an apologist for the Prussian state arises from the statement in the Preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, "What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational".[147] Hegel's aim is to describe reality and the reason within it; to interpret the world—the owl of Minerva flies only with the onset of dusk. When philosophy paints its 'grey on grey' a form of life has grown old. The philosopher can no more get out of his epoch than a man can jump out of his skin. The truth of what is and the true nature of actuality come together only in dialectical knowledge; not merely by a registering of outward *appearance*, but in the grasp of the underlying *essence* or *reality*. For him philosophy does not stop at external appearances but holds that if something exists then there must be a reason for its existence. For Hegel only real philosophy will scientifically uncover the truth, by rising from mere understanding (*Verstand*) to reason (*Vernunft*).

No matter how chaotic or arbitrary history may at first appear it is part of what Hegel terms a rational progress through what he calls the cunning of reason (*List der Vernunft*). So for Hegel Reason is purposive activity and shows itself in historical events and epochs, and crucially in the activity of concrete human beings. What is of most importance about the concept of Spirit in the *Phenomenology* is that it is comprehended as the unity of substance and subject—whereby the unity increasingly realises itself in historical shapes. For Hegel, the phenomenology of spirit *is* the history of

self-consciousness.[148] Hegel traces the development of Spirit from Oriental times through Greek civilisation, on to the beginnings of the Roman world—which lay, for him, in the struggle for recognition and in the relationship of lordship and bondage emerging from it—through to the Christianity of the middle ages, whose nature Hegel expounds in the principle of the unhappy consciousness, to the achievement of freedom in Germanic Christianity.

The story Hegel tells also applies to particular minds, for each reflective individual is able to recapitulate the educational journey in his own consciousness, up to that stage which the generic human consciousness has reached in his lifetime.[149] In *The Philosophy of Right* he states

> As a thought of the world, it (philosophy) appears only at a time when actuality has gone through its formative process and attained its completed state. This lesson of the concept is necessarily also apparent from history, namely that it is only when actuality has reached maturity that the ideal appears opposite the real and reconstructs this real world, which it has grasped in its substance, in the shape of the intellectual realm.[150]

Such a philosophy can, he tells us

> recognise in the semblance of the temporal and transient the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present.[151]

The reality of everyday bourgeois political and social life was of the utmost importance to Hegel. Hegel's work is characterised by his struggle to overcome the dichotomies and myriad of oppositions he saw in the world around him. Not least of these oppositions was the tension between the particular needs of the individual and the universal needs of the state. In Hegelian terminology this may be termed the dialectic between particularity and universality. Hegel was concerned with resolving the split between civil and political life; that is economic man fighting for his particular interests and political man as a citizen of the state, the universal. Hegel's idea was that the *individual* achieved freedom when *particular* economic will was preserved within the *universality* of a political community.

The individual could only achieve freedom by being a responsible and self-reliant participant in a state which he both respected and obeyed. This he believed would be the unity of subjective will and objective order. For Hegel genuine selfhood was only possible in a well-ordered state and a well ordered state was only possible if its constituent parts have achieved genuine selfhood. For Hegel the state comes about not to maintain power, wealth and status for the few at the expense of the rest; instead he insists that it is the self-awareness of the individual citizens which creates the state. He states that private and public needs and interests are fused; the core of the state is subjective, but the subject is objective/universal through membership of the state.

Chapter 4. Marx: Return from Egoistic Natural Rights to Communal Natural Law.

4.1 Marx: Universalist Rationality

Marx replies in criticism of Hegel that the truth about the bourgeois state is the existence of a tension between the existent and the ideal or inverting ideological. The *essence* of the ruling bourgeois class is its search for its own particular interests (profit, interest and rent) and its opposition to real universal rationality or universal justice in the ideal of communism. This is belied by its *appearance* as a protagonist of ideal universality, of classlessness, of egalitarian membership of the market and the state, as against the hierarchical social and political status of feudalism.

Marx believed that previous pretended universality like that of Hegel's rationalisation, idealisation, "transfiguration and glorification" of early bourgeois "man" and the world he created, private property and the market, especially in the kingdom of Prussia, has been distorted owing to the exploitative nature of the capitalist class and private property.

The aim of Hegel's idealism (not to be confused with Plato's idealism), according to Marx, was to idealise existing reality; that is, to show that the highest possible ideal, therefore the will of God, was already realised. Marx criticises Hegel for such a closure because it confuses something finite with eternal truth; Hegel uncritically accepts the Prussian state as the incarnation

of the divine idea.[152] Hegel universalises the particular by infinitising the finite. Marx says that Hegel is guilty of both uncritical idealism and uncritical positivism; he both idealises the Prussian state and accepts it as it is without criticism. Marx, following Feuerbach, criticises the inversion of subject and predicate in Hegel's philosophy, where man as a real subject is turned into a predicate of a universal substance, the Idea.

> This uncritical mysticism is the key both to the riddle of modern constitutions...and also to the mystery of the Hegelian philosophy...this point of view is certainly abstract, but the abstraction is that of the political state as Hegel has presented it. It is also atomistic, but its atomism is that of society itself. The point of view cannot be concrete when its object is abstract. [153]

Referring to Feuerbach's critique of Hegel's inversion (transposition) of subject and predicate Marx wrote in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" "Feuerbach founded true science and genuine materialism in the relations of 'man to man' [I to thou]".[154] So for Marx it is not the case that material reality is the product of the Idea but vice versa. Hegel conjures the finite out of the infinite. What Hegel does, says Marx, is "to fasten on what lies nearest to hand [i.e. the Prussian state] and prove that it is an actual moment of the idea".[155] Lucio Colletti quotes Hegel as follows, "The state is the divine will, in the sense that it is mind present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual shape and organisation of a world".[156] On the contrary, says Marx the state is the tool of a particular interest group; the bourgeois class.[157] "Just as religion does not make man, but rather man makes religion, so the

constitution does not make people, but the people make the constitution".[158] Marx breaks new ground in his analysis of Hegel by exposing a radically new level of problem altogether. This surpasses Feuerbach's analysis of Hegel and is a crucial turn in Marx's thought. To quote Colletti,

> From this insight there follows a radically new analysis. It is no longer accurate to say only that the concept of state Hegel offers us is a hypostatised abstraction; the point becomes that the modern state, the political state, is itself a hypostatised abstraction.[159]

So it is not just a matter of turning Hegel's philosophy the right way up but of turning the social world itself the right way up.[160] Hegel sought to end man's alienation through philosophy but Marx sought to do this in the revolutionising of humankind and society.

Marx insists that present needs should be met before human beings turn their minds towards some perfect future society. This is why Marx's work was a critique of the present before being a prediction of the future. For Marx there is no point in writing in detail about the goods a future society will provide when a majority in the present world live in conditions where they have barely enough food to survive. By drawing attention to the misery faced by the proletariat under the capitalist system, Marx showed the necessity of changing the present mode of production.

If we change a system which promotes selfishness to one which promotes co-operation, especially in production and distribution, this will have an

impact on how we live, think and act. It would create change, revolutionary change which would allow our teleological nature to flourish further. Marx describes the removal of capitalism's enforced production relations and alienated mode of being as like a re-birth or realisation of our true nature -- creative, communal, social, loving. This rationality for Marx is the true meaning of the productive (good) life. For Marx this is the call for philosophy to be abolished but at the same time realised (actualised).[161]

Marx's criticism of Hegel is radically different from that of the young Hegelians (Hegelian left) who mistakenly saw the problem as a contradiction between the principles and the conclusions of Hegel's philosophy. For the young Hegelians the principles are revolutionary and the conclusions conservative. For them, that is because Hegel made a personal compromise with the Protestant Prussian State. His closure of philosophy was premature. The main point of this line of interpretation is that, according to the Hegelian left, the celebrated Hegelian identity of the real and the rational should not be understood as the observation or consecration of an existing state of affairs, but as a programme to be actualised.

However, its actualisation for them merely meant a secular atheistic state with a constitutional monarchy and no established religion. This they believed would be the true universal state, Mind (Spirit, *Geist*) unfolded in history. For them this would be the actualisation or closure of philosophy. In reply to Bauer's "On the Jewish Question" which denied Jews the right to campaign against religious discrimination against them in politics on the grounds that the revolutionary task was to campaign for atheism in politics, Marx replied bitterly that confinement to the political was not revolutionary.

Political demands for secularism had been met elsewhere (America) and had not brought about human liberation. Real liberation would come from the workers' social and economic struggles such as those of the Silesian weavers whom the Young Hegelian, Ruge, condemned as "mere stomach-filling".

The Young Hegelians blamed such workers for degrading the honourable struggle for political rights into the gross material struggle for food. Marx's stinging reply to Ruge's article on "The Kingdom of Prussia and Social Reform" was that the universal, therefore human (or inhuman) relationship was on the material earth of production, not in the ethical "heaven" of citizenship. For Marx stomach-filling (which is of the earth) is not alienated.

In Hegelian idealism there is a myth that a change in consciousness is all that is required in order to free man from his alienated state. For Hegel the human task lies in "seeing the rose in the cross of the present", we must come to recognise that the actual is rational. The 'True Socialists' came to regard revolution as a simple matter of changing minds. The Kantian stance, which perceives the material (nature) as something below a truly human level (mind), is maintained throughout.

Each of these fails to comprehend what seemed so striking to Marx, that is, the practical nature of human activity whose aim is the realisation of our true nature -- of humanity in its richest form. Contrary to this, Hegelian idealism attempts to console individuals, rather than practically changing the actual circumstances that human beings find themselves in. For Marx the ultimate realisation of the Hegelian idea of the state as universal reason implies that, once the state is truly universal, it ceases to exist as a differentiated organism

and acts as a unity or totality. Hegel's adoption of the bureaucracy as the 'universal class' hypostatises a given historical phenomenon (early bourgeois man) into a self-fulfilling norm. Marx challenges the Hegelian idea's hypostasis in the German state, and sees the proletariat, the class with no other to exploit, as the potential for a real embodiment of the universal. In the "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction", Marx expresses this universalism when he mentions the proletariat for the first time. He writes that a class must be formed

> ...with radical chains, a class of civil society which is not a class of civil society, a class (*Stand*) which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere which has a universal character because of its universal suffering and which lays claim to no particular wrong because the wrong it suffers is not a particular wrong but wrong in general; a sphere of society which can no longer lay claim to a historical title, but merely to a human one, which does not stand in one-sided opposition to the consequences but in all-sided opposition to the premises of the...political system; and finally a sphere which cannot emancipate itself from – and thereby emancipating – all other spheres of society, which is, in a word, the total loss of humanity and which can therefore redeem itself only through the total redemption of humanity. This dissolution of society as a particular class is the proletariat.[162]

In *The Holy Family* Marx stresses the inhumanity of the proletariat's

situation:

> In the fully-formed proletariat the abstraction of all humanity, even of the semblance of humanity, is practically complete; since the conditions of life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in their most inhuman form.[163]

The universalistic nature of the proletariat continues to appear in Marx's later writings. It recurs in the Preamble to the General Rules of the International, drafted by Marx in 1864.[164] It also lies behind Marx's criticisms of Proudhon's mutuality, and Bruno Bauer and the 'True socialists' version of the role of the masses in emancipation.[165] Shlomo Avineri writes: "The disdain of Bauer and his disciples for the masses and their tendency to avoid complicity with the proletariat were motivated by a fear lest the general vision of liberty be replaced by advocacy of a particular class and espousal of its cause. For Marx, however, the proletariat was never a particular class, but the repository of the Hegelian 'universal class'." In 1870, Marx criticises the British labouring class because he sees its inability to universalise its experience as its major weakness.[166]

However, universalising is not the imposition of uniformity; for humans there are always different situations due to e.g. climatic location or differing abilities and disabilities which would need specific prescription in order to help humans live well, (large families, medical conditions, isolated areas, culture, ethnicity, sexuality), there would also be certain givens or needs (food, shelter, clothing, healthcare, education and love which includes

justice) which if not provided would in fact lead to dysfunctional or partial human living -- in short an inhuman life.

Under the capitalist economic system we are forced to submit to economic laws which are alien to us. This results in reducing the lives of vast swathes of humanity to starvation or beggary[167] and the ontological disaster (spiritual death) of reification (becoming a thing). Marx often used morbid language to describe the exploiters, and to stress how inhuman they had become. The capitalist is like a vampire[168] or werewolf lusting after the living blood of labour.[169] Dead labour (i.e. capital including machinery, raw materials and commodities) lives off living labour. As Marx puts it

> in its blind unrestricted passion, its werewolf hunger for surplus-value, capital oversteps not only the moral, but even the merely physical maximum bounds of the working-day. It usurps the time for growth, development, and the healthy maintenance of the body. It steals the time required for the consumption of fresh air and sunlight. It haggles over a meal-time.[170]

Bourgeois society is inhuman because it does not allow us to realise our nature: sociability in free, conscious, creative activity. Marx insists that the proletariat's overcoming of inhumanity would be the realisation and actualisation of man as a "universal, therefore free being", "understanding things according to the laws of their species and creating according to the laws of beauty".[171]

> When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character…In place of the old society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.[172]

Marx's historical materialism culminated in the claim that only the proletariat could and would produce a classless society which would inscribe on its banners: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". For Marx this social revolution can only be carried out by a class whose claims represent universal needs; this class is the proletariat. Marx describes the proletariat as genuinely the universal class because it is nothing but humanity.[173] Later he realised that the Russian peasantry in the form of the agrarian commune could fulfil the same potential.

Because the proletariat is propertyless and suffers the "total loss of humanity" and as such has no other class to exploit, Marx believes that they can genuinely be called the universal class and for that reason they must fight to attain pure rationality (justice, spirituality). This rationality would include common ownership and control of resources, production for the common good according to ability, distribution according to need rationally and democratically agreed in institutionally encouraged good will. Marx writes:

> No class in civil society can play this part unless it can arouse, in itself and in the masses, a moment of enthusiasm in which it associates and mingles with society at large, identifies itself with it, and is felt and recognised as the universal representative of this society. Its aims and interests must genuinely be the aims and interests of society itself, of which it becomes in reality the social head and heart. It is only in the name of the general interest that a particular class can claim general supremacy...that genius which pushes material force to political power, that revolutionary daring which throws at its adversary the defiant phrase: I am nothing and I should be everything.[174]

He repeats the same claim in the *German Ideology* .[175] Consequently he interpreted the Paris Commune as an attempt to replace the illusory universality of a partial state by an association truly universally orientated. The Commune was based on universal suffrage and was an example of the dissolution of the distinction between the state and civil society.

Any alleged class relativism of Marx is thus a misunderstanding. He actually wanted to see an end to all systems of "justice" which are class relative. For Marx, the proletariat is the universal class, and the answer to class relativism because it aims at classlessness. It will replace class relativity with an immediate relation to the proletariat's own realised essence, which is humanity. The realisation of this would be the universal justice or rightness of humanism, as it would simply be for the good of all of humanity, and

would be truly rational, hence just, because it would end forever the use of power, and of systems of "justice" to legitimate it. This universal rationality does not wish to dominate and exploit any particular class; classlessness is not the wielding but the abolition of power.

4.2 Communism As Humanism

In the political debate over whether there is such a thing as a just society, conflicting views of human nature play a key role. Marx can be interpreted as holding a view of human nature that is at one and the same time critical of all historically static notions and yet not given over to relativism because he still affirms there is human nature in general. More importantly he held that the specific function of humanity is its openness to the validity claims of universality and the good, whereas the bourgeois view of human nature rejects this specific function and confines humanity to the particular and the pleasant (or painful). This division over human nature parallels the conflict between the rational recognition of natural objective values, and their rejection in relativism.

Marx believed that humanity both communally and individually could only become authentic or truly human when the universal class rise to the ontological level by establishing communism or humanism or naturalism. This idea of justice for Marx could be viewed as liberation and rationality for the human race. He did not use the terminology of justice, possibly because he did not want to contaminate his work with the quid pro quo 'justice' of the bourgeoisie. However, (as we shall see) like Plato's ideal, Marx's communism is ontological justice. There is a lot of clear evidence that Marx

did not reject the idea of a human nature. [176] To give an example of this Marx says that

> ...man is not only a natural being; he is a *human* natural being; i.e. he is a being for himself and hence a *species-being,* as which he must confirm and realise himself both in his being and in his knowing. [177]

For Marx as much as for Plato the pursuit of goodness is not subjective, arbitrary or selfish but is rather is for the objective good of the species – the Golden Rule's advocacy of loving others as you would have others love you. For both, a new and "truly human morality"[178] and ontology are identical and consist in cultivating the shared goodness which is true community. Both Marx and Plato in the *Republic*'s first (healthy, not the second, feverish) society, share the belief that only in a community of direct producers is it possible for human creative potentialities to come to the fore and therefore become fully human and rational or spiritual. The community-oriented virtues, not only of Plato and Aristotle and of the mediaevals but also of Marx, are not compatible with the version of modernism which is connected with the needs of the individualist and therefore relativist capitalist class.

Marx, just like Hegel and Kierkegaard, holds that people ought to relate to each other on the basis of their own particular, but spiritually integrated, *individuality*. Marx demands that people live up to the Golden Rule; we must have in ourselves qualities correspondent to those that we seek in others. If we want trust from another, then we should ourselves be trustworthy; if we seek helpfulness, love, kindness, we ourselves should be helpful, loving,

kind.

Marx's thought is a rejection of mechanistic thinking and a return to dialectical thinking. His use of Aristotelian methodology in his rejection of Cartesianism and subsequent dualisms are evidence of his reliance on the earlier dialectical tradition. Marx's whole concept of nature is an Aristotelian one of development of *potential*. He writes that the human being "acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes his own nature". [179] For Marx the very concept of history is one of a world-creating process.

Humanity has a conscious life activity as opposed to mere animal instinct. In this it is correct to say that the individual is a self-conscious social being by nature. However, this is negated by capitalism. In the first volume of *Capital* Marx stated the implications of the process of labour,

> Labour is, in the first place, a process in which both man and Nature participate, and in which man of his own accord starts, negates, and controls the material reactions between himself and Nature. He opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, heads and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adopted to his wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature.[180]

Marx uses the concept of need to refer to the potentialities of species being. His aim is a radical egalitarianism: a universal account applicable to all humans and not merely relative to some or other groups or individuals. For to establish what human nature is, is also to establish what it is for humans to live well. Marx believed that man should labour to fulfil his "true needs", including the need for truly loving, social relationships. In the capitalist division of labour however, labour ceases to be the vehicle for satisfying and fulfilling our human needs. Instead for the majority of the species, labour is alienated into becoming as Marx said in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" a means to the basic "means of life" -- a means to merely a subsistence living, barely human.

Marx's thought may be regarded as a type of materialism as distinguished from Hegelian Idealism. But his position is more appropriately characterised as a form of naturalism, which is to be contrasted with the ontologies and anthropologies of both idealism and materialism.

> We see how consistent naturalism or humanism differs both from idealism and materialism and is at the same time their unifying truth.[181]

Marx's naturalism is materialism to the extent that he believes that the "real world" is fundamentally the world of nature; that man is to be conceived first of all as part of nature, a natural being existing alongside and among other natural objects and that consciousness is a faculty of this natural being by means of which it is present to other natural objects and to itself. But Marx's naturalism, as he points out in the theses on Feuerbach, also agrees with

some aspects of idealism. He holds that man is what he is by virtue of having passed through a course of development which must be understood in its own special terms (not only in terms of social categories, but also in terms of claims to rational validity) rather than in terms appropriate only to the understanding of mere inorganic and organic nature.

For Marx therefore humanity as it now exists is part of nature, but a being which transcends the purely material order, and makes use of the rest of nature as a means to the realisation of distinctively human purposes. Marx's understanding of human nature is Aristotelian -- the development of the substance's potency towards its *telos*, according to its form.[182] Marx quotes with approval Aristotle's definition of man as naturally a *zoon politikon*,[183] and agreed with Aristotle that the making of money by using money was against human nature.[184] As Marx says

> Money, which is the external, universal means and power -- derived not from man as man and not from human society as society -- to turn imagination into reality and reality into mere imagination, similarly turns real human and natural powers into purely abstract representations, and therefore imperfections and tormenting phantoms, just as it turns real imperfections and phantoms -- truly impotent powers which exist only in the individual's fantasy -- into real essential powers and abilities... It transforms loyalty into treason, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master,

> master into servant, nonsense into reason and reason into nonsense.[185]

For Marx communism is the reconciliation of essence and existence. In his notes on James Mill, Marx first shows the wage relationship to be a source of human alienation.[186] He then shows what communist or true human production would be like. In this passage Marx makes clear a number of things about human, social, loving production.[187] Firstly, I express my individuality in my product, secondly it is another human being's enjoyment of my product which satisfies me. Thirdly, the aim of production is use values which are produced for other people. Production in communism will therefore have a generous aim. Fourthly, rather than the result of production alienating the producer, we appear like so many mirrors in which we see the reflection of our nature as communal beings who produce for each other.

In true human production as described by Marx, the producer produces in order to give. There is no attempt to subject the Other to an exploitative relationship as in capitalism. Marx's position is very close to E. Levinas's view of the I-Thou relationship (Levinas wrote that "to recognise the Other is to recognise a hunger. To recognise the Other is to give").[188] Communism for Marx is the institutional structure which is both the material expression of, and a support for, our being what the Germans call *"mensch"*, which facilitates the virtue of humankindness. What it is to be *mensch* is illustrated by Marx in its contrast with the callous bourgeois attitude to begging.[189]

For Marx, unlike for the bourgeoisie, human nature is no barrier to achieving communism. This approach is contrary to the Sophistic or Hobbesian

approach which would argue that the innate selfishness of humans is what is natural and rational. This ontological "fact" ultimately rules out the establishment of communism. Marx understood that humans will exhibit selfishness in a society geared toward the competitiveness of the market, but he also fully understood that these circumstances are changeable; they are only conditioned by the capitalist system.

As Norman Geras writes

> Marx is challenging what he considers to be a false generalisation of attributes which are historically formed and culturally specific. He is seeking also to expose...its conservative ideological function. It should be obvious that to challenge a false or a conservative concept of human nature is not to impugn all concepts of it. To question whether certain, named characteristics are permanent and natural ones is neither to say nor to imply that there are not permanent and natural human characteristics.[190]

As the sixth thesis on Feuerbach puts it "Feuerbach resolves the religious essence into the human essence. But the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual. In its reality it is the ensemble of social relations".[191] For Marx while the human essence is not fixed, neither is human nature merely relative to class. The classless humanity which the

particular class which is the proletariat would bring about would be the achievement of universal humanity.

Marx's location of universality (spiritual rationality) has come under fire for its claim that only the proletariat as universal class is justified in a revolutionary struggle, which would be to achieve a communist mode of production. It has only lately been noticed that in the last decade of his life Marx was turning to the Russian peasantry as a potential universal class.[192] That development on Marx's part should lead us to a proper understanding of his concept of the universal class, which may help to answer the problems raised by the contemporary conflicts between the particular and the universal evidenced in "communitarianism", the "new social movements", "identity politics", and postmodernists' concerns about closed totalities. These at their best demand recognition of the validity of struggles for justice on the part of particular identities and cultures, treating the working class as just one particular section of humanity among the many particular sections of the oppressed. They protest against the imposition by a party and bureaucracy which could be seen as only alleged representatives of the working class, of a supposed universal good. This could be seen as a privileging of the particular subjective *interests* of that class, presented as the only objective good, not as relative but as absolute. They would be imposed at the expense of the good of other particular oppressed communities; for instance, at the expense of the Irish people's determining their own future. This is similar to the problem of the imposition of the Anglo-American culture as universal on the Quebecois, as presented by Charles Taylor. An extreme example of such an imposition would be Stalin's substitution of the alleged absolute reason, which is in fact only the particular will of the leader of the party of the

working class of Russia, as the embodiment of reason not only for Russia but for the rest of the human race. These are examples of the failure to recognise identity and difference, unity and multiplicity, universality and particularity, within the totality of the human race.

However, what can be said of Stalin and of many Marxists with regard to this point, cannot be said of Marx. Far from saying that the international working class's achievement of communism was the only thing that mattered, Marx believed nations like the Poles and the Irish have a right in their national struggles to establish their own particular identities free from the oppression of colonial powers in the name of a supposed universality. Engels argued that the Irish and the Poles "have not only the right but even the duty to be nationalistic before they become internationalistic".[193] Also, Engels comments

> the Irish formed a distinct nationality of their own, and the fact that they used the English language could not deprive them of the right, common to all, to have an independent national organisation within the international.[194]

Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht fell into the trap of not recognising the importance of particularity when they denied the Poles and the Irish the right to a national struggle. They thought that the Poles should be treated the same as the Russians, and the Irish the same as the British, because as workers they were all part of the one universal class: to act otherwise would

be to put the particular before the universal. But this argument is obviously against not only the spirit but the letter of Marx's own writings and is an example of the corruption of Marx's thought by Marxists.

A similar imposition was attempted by the "Marxist" Official I.R.A. in the early 1970's, which forced a split that severely weakened not only the national struggle, but, in addition, the possibility of building an effective revolutionary social movement in Ireland. This has led them for instance to support Orangeism against the struggle for Irish independence. Like Luxembourg they believed that the British presence in Ireland which stopped unification of Ireland was no longer important: only the alleged unification of the working class was important.

What they attempted in Marx's name was to claim a universal "rationality" which was contrary to Marx's expressed views. A particular identity must be recognised before or together with a universal class position, as Marx showed in his recognition of the rights of the Irish working class to autonomous recognition in the I.W.M.A., against English trade unionists' chauvinism.

Marx's criticism of Hegel could be expressed in contemporary terms along the lines that Hegel's system was a closure of philosophy and that Marx's philosophy remained an open one. But it could be argued that Marx's own philosophy merely postponed the closure, to the future date of the victory of the proletariat. There are grounds for such a claim; for instance Marx said that communism would be both "the abolition and the actualisation of

philosophy";[195] he also claimed that communism was the "solution to the riddle of history"[196] and "the end of pre-history".[197] Among claims that there is a closure in Marx's thinking there are two different versions: one, that there is a mechanistic closure, and the other, that there is an idealist one.

Is there a mechanistic closure in Marx's thought? The famous 1859 Preface to *The Critique of Political Economy* is perhaps the most appropriate place to look. The Preface is primarily an introduction to Marx's publications on economics which culminated in the four volumes of *Capital*. "Marxists", such as Plekhanov and Kautsky, argue that the Preface represents much more than a meagre prelude to Marx's thought. They use it to postulate the idea that the economic base determines the superstructure which is made up of political and legal institutions. Change in society is considered by them to be the consequence of developments in material productive forces and the technical division of labour which alone are considered bona fide 'relations of production'. This is how they understood "no social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed".[198]

Plekhanov thought that capitalism was a universally necessary relation of production that all forms of society would at some stage pass through, and that this should be seen as a natural and progressive occurrence. This is a mechanical process which culminates or closes with communism. He took Marx's work to imply that capital had a universal nature, regarding it as the necessary consequence of the development of social forces, and that the expropriation of the peasants was "necessary" to bring about the

socialisation of the workers. This is the belief that social mechanism is a scientific truth on a par with the law of gravity.

Mechanists believe that the 1859 Preface uncovers the central tenets of the material conception of history and represents the starting point which Marx builds upon. For them, it states that the economic base determines the superstructure which is made up of political and legal institutions. The superstructure includes forms of consciousness which are considered as an effect of the base. The base is specifically economic whereas the superstructure is made up of the political (non-economic) institutions. Change in society is considered to be the consequence of developments in material productive forces.

A technological determinist interpretation of change denies the possibility that we can avoid the capitalist mode of production, as this mechanism insists that technology is the only way to communism. The material productive forces are therefore assigned explanatory primacy and we reach closure or completion when all nations pass through the technological stage: only then could communism be possible. Technological determinism, though considered functionally, rather than causally, is for some mechanistic Marxists the only approach to understanding how society operates. In *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx asserts "the hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill society with the industrial capitalist".[199] Mechanists identify this as being the essence of Marx's thought. For G. A. Cohen Marx is best understood in functionalist terms; technology is the central dynamic force.[200] Mechanism excludes moral values, and analytic Marxists are in that tradition when they try to reduce moral struggles to self-

interested ones, and follow Allen Wood in interpreting Marx as an anti-moralist.

Engels in 1886, three years after Marx's death, said, in his *Ludwig Feuerbach*, that there were two great camps in philosophy, the idealists and the materialists, and that the materialists were right.[201] For "Marxists" like Plekhanov and Kautsky this became evidence to support a closed mechanistic interpretation of Marx's thought. The highly influential pamphlet was no doubt the chief intellectual source of much Marxist thought: in Engels's account we find a wholesale and uncritical rejection of idealism in favour of its opposite materialism, which will lead to communism. The mechanists argue strongly that this is a determinist history of an irreversible development whereby means of production automatically cause changes in relations of production. This is also a theory of stages of utilitarian progress which each society in turn inescapably has to pass through -- or be put through. However Marx insists that his historical account of the genesis of capitalism in *Capital* should not be read as a universal law. In a letter to the Russian journal *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1877 Marx insists that:

> The chapter on primitive accumulation does not pretend to do more than trace the path by which, in western Europe, the capitalist order of economy emerged from the womb of the feudal economy. But that is too little for my critic. He feels he absolutely must metamorphose my historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historico-philosophic theory of the general

> path every people is fated to tread, whatever the historical circumstances in which it finds itself, in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which ensures, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labour, the most complete development of man. But I beg his pardon. He is both honouring and shaming me too much.[202]

This mechanistic unilinear view of history as progress in freedom, the "Whig interpretation of history", sees stages in progress, not as a matter of the past, but as an essential and still today a relevant part of the present. It includes the absolute progress in Enlightenment from the Catholic stage to the more enlightened (in Weber's terminology "rational') one of Protestantism. This also in turn leads to the stages of Deism, freethinking and atheism. Each historic stage, wherever and whenever it appears, has to be jettisoned in favour of its historic successor. This has led Marxists for instance to support reactionary Orangeism against the struggle for Irish independence.

The mechanistic approach demands imposition by representatives of the industrial working class of a universal good; namely the interests of that class, seen as the only good and imposed at the expense of other particular goods. Therefore, Stalin becomes the possessor of the supremely rational will as the leader of the party of the working class of the country of the revolution. That can be interpreted as the embodiment of reason for the rest of the human race -- justifying the closure of philosophy.

Marx on the contrary sees the essence of the proletariat as its propertylessness -- it has no other class to exploit. He believes that it can therefore genuinely be called the universal class, and that it can attain pure rationality. This version of rationality claims that it is only the universal class itself which can in its revolutionary struggle achieve humanist emancipation, the infinitude of the human *telos*.

Is Marx's thought, then, an idealist closure? For Marx the proletarian class united by its universal suffering of total injustice has within it the means (revolutionary activity) to redeem itself and to redeem humanity; by liberating itself it will liberate the whole of humanity. Marx views this as a dialectical culmination; he refers to it as the rational kernel in the mystical shell of Hegel's dialectical philosophy.

> Communism is the genuine resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man, the true resolution of the conflict between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution to the riddle of history and knows itself to be the solution.[203]

Marx's early writings are imbued with Feuerbachian humanism, and there are resonances of idealism, but they must be radically distinguished from Hegelian Idealism. For Marx the fundamental distinguishing feature of his thought -- which he says is "neither materialism nor idealism, but the unifying truth of both" -- is that it is dialectical. His position is more

appropriately characterised as a form of naturalism, which is to be contrasted with the ontologies and anthropologies of both idealism and materialism.

So Marx's naturalism and humanism (which for him is synonymous with communism) is to be distinguished both from idealism and materialism and at the same time contains an element of truth from both. Marx's naturalism is at one with materialism to the extent that he believes that the 'real world' is fundamentally the world of nature; that man is to be conceived first of all as part of nature, a natural being existing alongside and among other natural objects and that consciousness is a faculty of this natural being by means of which it is present to other natural objects and to itself. But Marx's naturalism also agrees with some aspects of idealism. He holds that man is what he is by virtue of having passed through a course of development which must be understood in its own special terms (in terms of social categories) rather than in terms appropriate to the understanding of mere inorganic and animal nature. Man thus is what he has made himself to be, through his own activity, which, at least collectively considered and in relation to the laws governing mere things, is free and self-determined. For Marx communism is the reconciliation of essence and existence and the end to all dualisms: this could be interpreted as a closure or completion of both philosophy and history. However, such an interpretation would be mistaken.

The aim of pre-Cartesian dialectical thought was to achieve an understanding of the relationship between the finite and the infinite. It could be argued that the investigation of this relationship leads to the knowledge that a closure in the sense of a totalising understanding of philosophy is

impossible. For dialectical thinkers this does not signify despair or breed a sense of futility regarding the attempt to form such an understanding; rather this truth merely states that we can know something of the relationship between the finite and the infinite, and that this understanding can be enriched and clarified by the use of reason, but it can never be total or absolute. The acceptance of this inaugurates both negative theology and negative dialectics.[204] Plato affirms this in discussing The Good beyond being and starts a tradition which in Aquinas for example, is intellectually impelled to understand the relationship between man and the Good. It also understands that while we can move closer to the truth we can never fully possess a knowledge of God's nature or essence. In short this tradition admits that we can never know the totality of being.

The statement "Religion is the opium of the people' (while taken out of its context i.e. religion is "the sigh of the oppressed", "the soul of a soulless condition" and "the heart of a heartless world")[205] raises the question of how Marx can be said to be in a dialectical tradition whose function was to investigate the true relationship between the finite and infinite. Is religion itself a closure of philosophy? The answer to these questions must involve investigating the difference between Plato's dialectic and Marx's, or the origins of dialectics and the present inheritor of that tradition.

For the dialectical thinker, things, persons and institutions are measured by their essence -- the finite only has value in its relation to the positive perfect infinite (the Platonic Idea), through universal thought or mind. Reason's role is to understand or grasp the ideal, the just or the good -- what should be, or the potentially perfect. In doing so reason grasps the nature of reality; not

only what actually is or what actually exists in the material world but also what ought to be -- the best, the truest, the most perfect -- the ideal. This dialectical ontology and epistemology is not based on a quasi-Manichaean dualism between matter and mind, finite and infinite, nature and spirit. Rather such an understanding is reached in terms of a rational totality which is hierarchical and inclusive; in short dialectical. For dialectical thinking, thought and being are thus distinct, yet essentially related. It aims at a unitary godlike understanding of being where the value of anything is its measuring up to its truth. This dialectical unity of fact and value is connected with the unity of theory and practice. Therefore insight into it requires not only intellectual but moral change and even ontological change -- a change in being.

Marx expected this kind of change from the proletariat: a change from the alienated possessive, exploitative bourgeois mode of being, to the generous, loving or truly human and communal being of communism. For both Plato and Marx the rational and natural aim is being, not having; and love is dialectically, as in Plato's *Symposium,* both desiring and giving. Happiness and justice are self-realisation in community -- shared growth in goodness. When this communal essence is realised then individuals will be truly bonded; they will not relate to each other in terms of pre-social individually chosen ends, in pursuit of separate interests.

Marx's vision of humanity and nature, humanism, is the antithesis of the Cartesian dichotomy of mind (human) and matter (nature). Marx's thought can be seen as a development of the thought that precedes the Cartesian dichotomy, that is, of Plato and Aristotle and Aquinas rather than that of

Hobbes, Kant and Bentham. This fusion of humanism and naturalism is the objectively proper flourishing of humanity and is not a question of possessive rights but of true being. Marx's thought shares in the classical non-reductionist dialectical natural law tradition's vision of nature as emergentist and orientated towards infinite value.[206] For him this would lead to communism or humanism and would open up infinite possibilities for humanity which are stunted, thwarted and limited by an economic system which produces for profit. Against mechanists and Hegelian idealists Marx states that communism is not the goal of history, rather it is the end of pre-history and the start of History proper. This is not a closure therefore: it is a new beginning which opens up the latent potential humans have for creative production.

Marx's whole concept of nature is of potential development. As he puts it

> Nature is man's inorganic body, that is to say nature in so far as it is not the human body. Man lives from nature, i.e. nature is his body, and he must maintain a continuing dialogue with it if he is not to die. To say that man's physical and mental life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature.[207]

Marx is not only anti-Cartesian, he actually returns to the pre-Cartesian, praising Aristotle for insights into not only economic but political and moral realities. Marx attacks moralities on both sides of the Cartesian dichotomy, Hobbes and Bentham on the hedonist side, Kant on the "ascetic". In contrast

to the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and matter Marx said, "thought and being are indeed distinct, but they also form a unity".[208]

For Marx capitalism is the real closure of thought and society because it is the imposition of class rule, relative to the interests of a particular class, in the name of universal justice. Capitalist society presupposes the antagonistic interests of different classes as well as different individuals. But the finite interest of one particular class is given infinite, absolute value. This critique of the imposition of a false universal is the valuable core of postmodernism, which offers a similar criticism of Hegelianism and Stalinism, in the name of difference and against totalising identities. This is important, but it is one-sidedly against any possible principled unity, and is prejudicially anarchistic. Firstly it must be said that post-modernism is merely an extension of modernism (which is basically what Engels called 'anarchy of production'). The essence of this has been brilliantly captured by Stanley Rosen who says that "Postmodernism is Enlightenment gone mad".[209] Some of its criticisms e.g. of Stalinism are valid; the problem is that they are done in the name of relativism or anarchism. Also as we have seen they are not valid criticisms of Marx; in fact postmodernists often echo without acknowledgment Marx's own arguments against bourgeois modernity. These could also be used against the corrupted mechanistic social-engineering modernism which, with the help of its geo-political antagonist imperialism, prevailed in the U.S.S.R.

Postmodernism aimed to do to the "communist" priesthood in Moscow, what modernity did to the old priests and Kings. But it fails to equally recognise that capitalists like General Motors or Shell are similarly the new "priests" on the other side and as such they equally need to be challenged.

Postmodernism is the new iconoclasm which seeks to deal the last blow to a religion which they claim came from Hegel through Marx to Stalin. Like Voltaire, it is suspicious of 'priests"; it despises authority and rejects its claims to rationality — but only by rejecting in principle any possibility of a unifying rationality. Like the Protagorean position adopted by Mackie it adopts a completely relativist ontology—there is no right (reasonable) thing to do other than following your own pleasure.

4.3 Marx and the Capitalist Economy

While Marx employed the methods and key concepts of the economic science of his day in analysing capitalism (especially the labour theory of value), he embedded that explanation in a higher-order philosophical theory of the economy. This latter theory, derived from the Aristotelian account of the household economy, seeks to situate the economy in an overarching account of the community. Also for Marx, the fitting function of economic life in a community should be rational, a means to the realisation of its higher (non-economic) purposes. As Marx says, a truly human economy "...is a means to a final goal which lies outside circulation, namely the appropriation of use-values, the satisfaction of needs".[210]

In many of his works on economics, Marx credits Aristole with providing the key insights for his own critique of political economy. In *Capital* vol.1 Marx writes

> Aristotle's genius is displayed precisely by his discovery of a relation of equality in the value-expression of commodities. Only the historical limitation inherent in the society in which he lived prevented him from finding out what "in reality" this relation of equality consisted of.[211]

Marx made specific reference to the importance of Aristotle in his own thinking at every stage in his intellectual development. This is of crucial significance, as these acknowledgements provide clear evidence that the form and substance of Marx's own theories are to be understood within the broader cultural and philosophical traditions of classical antiquity.[212]

He mentions Aristotle thirty three times in his doctoral dissertation *On the Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature*,[213] and twenty times in his notebooks on Epicurean philosophy. He connects his theory of production and consumption in the *Grundrisse* to Aristotle's theory of potentiality and actuality in the *Metaphysics*,[214] and he refers to Aristotle eight times in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*.[215] In the first volume of *Capital* he acknowledges Aristotle as the "greatest thinker of antiquity"[216] and as crucial to the development of his labour theory of value. There are many other specific references in *Capital* to Aristotle's theories such as that of value.[217] Michael De Golyer's article in *Marx and Aristotle* affirms that for Marx

> Value was...the material basis, as well as the concept, from which all else derived. Even while Hegel's *Logic* and its philosophical methodology undoubtedly

> influenced Marx, the *Logic* presupposed a familiarity with the development of logic to its author's time; and in the history of that growth, Aristotle as the "Father of Logic" stands squarely at its inception. Even economics – in the minds of many readers, Marx's major fixation – finds a significant portion of its earliest source in Aristotle.[218]

Marx borrowed from Aristotle the distinction between use value and exchange value, the distinction between the economics of the household economy (trade and barter) and the commerce of chrematistic economy (exchange for profit as merchants' capital and interest-bearing capital). He used Aristotle's ideas about the political and social nature of man, and the relation between leisure, slavery and technological development.

Central elements of the Aristotelian critique of an economy given over to Midaslike acquisition also find their way into Marx's evaluation of capitalism, and the ideal of the ancient *oikos* (household) forms one of the core parts of Marx's theory of communism as the new household economy. The Greek household economy offered Marx a glimpse into a world in which the economy was put to the service of human ends and in which it was their designs and not the uncontrolled, autonomous workings of the market that shaped relations between persons.

At the most fundamental level, the contrast between C-M-C and M-C-M' formations—drawn from the Aristotelian distinction between *oikonomike* and *chrematistike, Kapelike* and *tokos*—had two functions for Marx. First, it

schematised the key differences between the need-orientated pre-capitalist economy and its surplus-directed successor. Second, it provided for Marx (as it had also for Aristotle) a normative dividing line useful in marking out, on the one side, an economy that was governed by human purposiveness and, on the other side, an economy that ruled over and consumed the persons engaged in it. Thus Marx would write "Men once more gain control of exchange, production and the way they behave to one another".[219] W.J. Booth points out that

> The *oikos* economy's quality of being subordinated to human rule, and its being in the service of an end outside of production and circulation, unquestionably appealed to Marx and gave him a part of the foundation for his theory of communism.[220]

Marx sought to capture the second type of economic formation in his "general formula" of capital—M-C-M'—indicating that the driving purpose of the economy (M') was the unlimited acquisition of embodied surplus value. This manner of understanding capitalism was also taken from Aristotle, and especially from his idea of the chrematistic life, *chrematistike* (the art of acquiring money wealth) which he contrasted with *oikonomike*. In *Capital* vol. 1, Marx states

> Aristotle contrasts economics with 'chrematistics'. He starts with economics. So far as it is the art of acquisition, it is limited to procuring the articles necessary to existence and useful either to a household or a

> state…Therefore, as he goes on to show, the original form of trade was barter, but with the extension of the latter there arose the necessity for money. With the discovery of money, barter of necessity developed into… trading in commodities, and this again, in contradiction with its original tendency, grew into chrematisics, the art of making money.[221]

Marx in the first sentences both of *Capital*, Vol. I and of the *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* states that "The wealth of societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails appears as an 'immense collection of commodities'". For Marx it is the same forces that produce both poverty and wealth. Both are the consequences of systematic human action. Marx did not see communism in distributive terms.[222] Moral and political philosophers in the analytic tradition, who prefer to single out for treatment "issues" such as abortion and nuclear weapons as totally separate, think of "poverty" as an isolated social problem, and one which could be overcome by a localised redistribution of 'wealth'—meaning money. But this is not what Marx, Aristotle or Aquinas understood as the meaning of wealth. The distinction between use-value and exchange-value [223](what Aquinas following Aristotle calls the difference between natural and artificial riches) is foundational to the early Western tradition. Marx stands squarely in that tradition. This is why R.H. Tawney calls Marx "the last of the schoolmen".[224]

This tradition has a rich dialectical, teleological, social ontology of humanity, which is shared by Marx. George McCarthy in *Dialectics and*

Decadence draws attention to the importance of this insight for Marx:

> Out of Aristotle's critique of unlimited and unnatural wealth acquisition flows Marx's whole rejection of bourgeois economics and commodity exchange. Aristotle is very helpful to Marx in the development of his theory of circulation and commerce. However, Marx must reach past the limits of Aristotle's understanding of commodities and money into the areas of the creation of surplus value, profit accumulation, and the social modes of capitalist production.[225]

For Marx communism will only come about with the ending of the alienated division of the political, the economic and the moral (the unity of which was thought by Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas to be an absolutely essential part of rationality). Marx's understanding of a social totality derives both from Hegel's concept of totality and Aristotle's concept of society as an organic whole.

At the same time, the novelty of Marx's appropriation of the idea of the household economy must be recognised. In fact it was a transfiguration, and was due to the importance Marx attached to autonomy and to his profound hostility to the absence of freedom and the presence of hierarchy which he associated with the despotic nature of the ancient household economy. Because of slavery, however, Aristotle unlike Marx could not base his ethics on the injustice of commodity production, and the social and economic relations whereby labour power itself becomes a commodity. In *Capital* vol.

1 Marx reveals that the commodification of labour power into abstract labour is the necessary condition for a solution to Aristotle's problem; for it is only in the fully developed form of commodity production that the secrets behind it become visible. As McCarthy puts it

> Marx is indebted to Aristotle's view of society. That is, Marx's whole critique of political economy as reflected in the values of liberalism and structures of capitalism are ultimately based on his reading of Aristotle's critique of false acquisition and moneymaking. What Marx has done is to rewrite and update Aristotle's works on ethics and political theory for the modern audience. The new theory is a neo-Aristotelianism informed by German idealism, nineteenth-century political economy, and French socialism.[226]

For Marx the emergence of capitalism meant a shift from the predominance of use value, in which the human being appears as the aim of production, to exchange value and to the search for ever-growing surpluses. In place of the direct relations of domination and servitude characteristic of the precapitalist world, human relations in capitalist society are mediated via exchange and it is just this pervasive presence of exchange that sets the real basis for the "freedom" and "justice" of bourgeois society.

Marx repeating Aristotle states, "The circulation of money as capital is...an end in itself... The circulation of capital has therefore no limits".[227] Marx's crucial distinction between use-value and exchange value is connected to the

distinction between useful (or concrete) labour and abstract labour. Our labour-power is our capacity for useful concrete labour, whose products have a use-value; in order to create exchange-value it must be bought and used as abstract labour. Use-value is for Marx a transhistorical category, which may be applied within all modes of production. Exchange-value by contrast, has nothing to do with the intrinsic qualities or usefulness of goods; it merely expresses the tradability, the market value, of any commodity.

Marx condemned Ricardo's approach to capitalism:

> Ricardo in his book (rent of land): Nations are merely workshops for production, and man is a machine for consuming and producing. Human life is a piece of capital. Economic laws rule the world blindly. For Ricardo men are nothing, the product everything.[228]

Marx was also opposed to the 'state socialism of people like Ferdinand Lassalle of the German Workers Party whose politics was confined to bargaining with Bismarck for reforms like an old age pension, and in general better treatment of workers within the bourgeois system. Marx thought that the approaches of the Ricardian and Lassallean socialists were worthless because they could not achieve the emancipation of the working class.

Marx showed the difference between an economy oriented to objective universal human need and an economy oriented to "preference satisfaction", which for the capitalist is the accumulation of value. The latter depended on exploitation, which Marx showed to be the defining characteristic of

capitalism. In the market, the capitalist and the free labourer appear to make an equal exchange between a day's labour and the day's wage and the labourer is said to receive the full value of his day's labour. He uncovered the hidden essence behind this appearance.

For Marx the extractive power of the capitalist is based on ownership of the means of production. He shows that in the bourgeois mode of production labour-power becomes a commodity and that behind this mode of production lies a trick. Under capitalist production those who do not have access to other means of production and who cannot sell the produce of their labour must instead sell their ability to labour, or labour power. It becomes a commodity which the capitalist uses to produce other commodities. But it is also the source of the phenomenon Marx registered in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts", that under capitalism the rich become richer and the poor become relatively poorer.

> We shall start out from a present-day economic fact. The worker becomes poorer the more wealth he produces, the more his production increases in power and extent. The worker becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he produces. The devaluation of the human world grows in direct proportion to the increase in value of the world of things. Labour not only produces commodities; it also produces itself and the workers as a commodity and it does so in the same proportion in which it produces commodities in general.[229]

Marx discovered how the capitalist is able to buy the elements of production -- raw materials, instruments of labour and labour-power -- and sell the commodities produced at their apparent values, yet is still able to create a sum of value additional to that laid out in his original purchase. The additional sum is surplus value which becomes profit, interest and rent, the end result of the process.

In the capitalist market place, the alleged "value of labour"— or 'a fair wage'— is said to be settled by the forces of supply and demand, in 'free, fair, and open competition'. However, in capitalism the class nature of exploitation is not immediately clear. It gives the impression that two individuals meet and freely exchange. In reality however the relationship is between two members of antagonistic classes. The capitalist tricks the worker into thinking that s/he is exchanging labour for wages, and that s/he is being paid for each hour of the day that s/he has been employed. This enables the capitalist to exchange wages for the *use* of labour-power as labour—which alone has the power to increase the value of other commodities.

The *use-value* of labour-power to the capitalist is that it can be used as *n* hours' labour, which generates a value exceeding the value of the wages paid for it. The capitalist consumes *n* hours' labour which produces *n* units of value, while only a fraction of *n* (*x/yn*) units of value are returned to the worker as wages. The capitalist pays the worker only the value created in part of the day's labour, what Marx calls 'necessary labour' -- that part of the day's labour which is necessary to create the value embodied in the wage. The capitalist therefore only pays the worker for a fraction of the day's use

of labour-power. The rest of the day's labour remains unpaid, but it produces surplus-value, which is realised as profit, interest and rent.

The *value* of labour power is determined, as is that of every other commodity, by the labour time necessary for its production, and when necessary its reproduction. Wages are therefore paid to the worker only at a subsistence level, what it costs to produce the worker's labour power, and through his/her family, to reproduce the supply of labour-power.

> The exchange of equivalents, the original operation with which we started, has now become turned around in such a way that there is only an apparent exchange... The relation of exchange subsisting between capitalist and labourer becomes a mere semblance appertaining to the process of circulation, a mere form, foreign to the real nature of the transaction, and only mystifying it.[230]

Marx exposes the wage relationship as the theft (i.e. taking without recompense) of surplus labour.

> Although one part only of the workman's daily labour is paid, while the other part is unpaid, and while that unpaid or surplus labour constitutes exactly the fund out of *which* surplus value or profit is formed, it seems as if the aggregate labour was paid labour.[231]

For Marx the trick of extracting surplus value replaces the chains of chattel slavery and the socio-political hierarchy of feudal serfdom, by persuading the worker that s/he is a free agent in a fair market engaged in relations of justice with other free and equal human beings. Marx unmasked and de-mystified this process by showing that this is robbery and compulsion under the pain of death. This involves a double deceit (or confidence trick) by the capitalist.

As we have seen Marx brilliantly exposes the capitalist's 'sleight of hand' by showing that the origin of surplus-value is unpaid labour, unrequited labour time. Indeed the capital out of which the wage itself comes is the surplus value which has been created in previous unpaid labour time. So in the final analysis Marx says that: ' the whole thing still remains the age old activity of the conqueror, who buys commodities from the conquered with the money he has stolen from them'.[232]

A. The First Trick.

The everyday *deceptive appearance* is that there seems to be an equivalent exchange of wages/labour, a 'fair' exchange. This is pure illusion, generated by the practice of paying by the hour. For it leaves unanswered the question: where does the capitalist's profit come from? The answer is that it comes from extortion. It is not CMC, an exchange of equivalents, of commodities of equal value. It is MCM'; that involves, *firstly,* the *exchange* of two commodities of equivalent value, wages (M) for the unique commodity labour-power (C); but *secondly,* the subsequent *use* of labour-power as

necessary and also as surplus labour. It therefore involves slavery, the extraction of surplus labour which is unpaid, unrequited. Indeed, since the use of labour-power, not only for surplus, but even for all labour, necessary and surplus, is paid for out of previous profit, created by previous surplus labour, the capitalist obtains all labour free, gratis and for nothing. This is *nihil pro quo*, the height of *commutative* injustice. It is also the necessary result of the *distributive* injustice of the prior distribution of means of production, which ensures that out of the value created by labour the worker receives wages, while profit goes to the owner of capital, interest to the owner of finance capital, and rent to the land-owner (the former, and in Marx's day still a current, ruling class—which in the House of Lords last used its power in 1912 to block the Irish Home Rule Bill).

Foolishly the Ricardian Socialists want the 'full proceeds of labour' from the employer - impossible in the capitalist system, which is why Marx calls them utopian. The difference between the Ricardians and Lassalleans on the one side and Marx on the other, is that Marx does not demand justice *within* the wage relationship as they do, because for him the dual reality is (i) at the *market* level the value-equivalent *exchange* of wages for the commodity (and means of production) labour-power—as 'fair' an exchange as buying or selling a car, but also (ii) at the *production* level the *use* of labour-power as labour, by its new owner the capitalist, to make profit out of it (also interest and rent). The capitalist is fully entitled to this *within* the economic system; it is as 'fair' as using a newly bought car as a taxi, to make profit out of it.

B. The Second Trick.

Even the equivalent exchange (in the market) of the commodities, labour-power and wages, is an illusion if it is thought of as an equal exchange of a normal commodity, since labour-power is a unique commodity. The seller of labour-power does not seem to lose freedom or justice, since the subsequent use of surplus labour belongs to the capitalist by way of bourgeois property rights. The buyer of labour-power is fairly entitled to use labour-power as s/he wants, as the buyer of a car is entitled to use it as a taxi. But what the capitalist wants is to force the worker to work for longer than it takes to produce the value embodied in the wage. Thus labour-power is not a normal commodity, since not only is it ontologically the seller's alienated life-essence, but economically it produces more value than it fetches.

Is the theory of exploitation morally neutral? No: it reveals two levels, one of exchange and one of production and it shows that the level of production involves the opposite of exchange. The 'fair' and 'classless' *form* of the exchange part of the relationship conceals the *material* (class part) relationship, its *content,* which is exploitation. In fact Marx's use of the conquest metaphor expresses the truth that the worker is working for nothing, which is unjust like all other forms of slavery.

The wage relationship is not freedom or justice; it is exploitation. But this is an economic right by the standards of bourgeois 'freedom' and 'justice'. It is a move in the capitalist game - it does not require cheating. So there can be no internal criticism of the wage relationship. Workers should demand a new game, not new dice. The bourgeoisie glorifies this relationship as *de jure* the highest justice and rationality. But this 'rationality' is disputed by Marx both epistemologically and ontologically, procedurally and substantially. Marx

explains in *Wages, Price and Profit* that the wage can never rise above subsistence level.[233] Wholly other factors than justice decide the wage. The wage is an outcome of the bitterest struggle. In the fight the worker cannot appeal to bourgeois justice. Marx believes that every *class* calls its "justice" 'natural' and 'human', but that the proletariat (the last class) is the first class genuinely entitled to speak of its mode of production—communism—as 'naturalism' and 'humanism', because it is a classless mode.

4.4 Alienation: Background and Roots in Marx.

The concept of human alienation and de-alienation can be found in the Judaeo-Christian myth of fall and redemption. The concept of alienation also found expression in the Old Testament concept of idolatry. Marx's critique of fetishism can be seen as akin to the critique of idolatry. When Moses came down from the mountain the people had built a golden calf to which they attributed magical powers and which they worshipped. Marx similarly realised that in capitalism, human beings are ruled by their own creation. Capitalism was also produced by human beings but it actually degrades them to an even lower level than the lost tribe in the desert. For Marx capitalism is even worse because it really becomes the master over human beings, dictating not only how they live but whether or not they live at all.

Marx's philosophical thought was both influenced by and a reaction to Hegel and Feuerbach. Hegel, in his philosophy, sought to end man's alienation from God. Hegel conceived of man realising himself as God. He believed that once man conceives of himself as a spiritual being which is part of an

absolute Spirit (*Geist*) man can now conceive of himself as God. Human destiny would now be to establish a concrete human divinity. This would come about when the world of actual, concrete existence was fused with Hegelian philosophical insight, ending man's alienation from God.

For the young Marx Hegel seemed to offer an escape from dualism and pointed instead to the Idea within reality itself. For Marx this meant that man was now able to shape his own destiny; God now dwelt on earth; dignity was now vested in man and history.

But Marx was greatly influenced by Feuerbach, who sought a kind of Hegelianism devoid of any trace of religious mystification. Unlike Hegel, Feuerbach regarded alienation[234] as an altogether negative phenomenon[235] and he criticised Hegel for presenting a rational Christianity[236]. For Feuerbach our knowledge of God is merely a reflection of our knowledge of ourselves; the whole notion of God is a figment of man's imagination and through religion man projects his own positive attributes onto a purely imaginary divinity.

For Feuerbach it was not a case of seeing a divine idea within man. He takes as his subject Hegel's predicate: man is not a manifestation (or creation) of some mysterious idealistic process but rather the mysterious idea (i.e. God) is the creation of man.

While Marx owes much to Feuerbach and his analysis of Hegel[237] he criticises him for concentrating too much on religion; for Marx religion is a symptom of and not the cause of man's alienation[238].

> Religious suffering is at one and the same time the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions.[239]

Now that man's alienation has been unmasked in its sacred form Marx says it is the immediate task of philosophy, which is in the service of history, to unmask man's self-estrangement in its secular (unholy) form[240].

> Thus the criticism of heaven turns into the criticism of earth, the criticism of religion into the criticism of law and the criticism of theology into the criticism of politics.[241]

Marx agrees with Feuerbach that man is alienated through religion but Marx sought to identify the manifold alienations of man. Marx saw the radical and original source of man's unhappiness and alienation as the exploitation of man by man[242].

Alienation for Marx is not a feeling. It is a way of being, or rather non-being. In the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" Marx recognised that people were alienated in capitalist society. This can be summed up under two broad headings. Firstly there is alienation of the human being as a worker and secondly there is alienation of the person as a social being. The worker is alienated from the product s/he produced, s/he is also alienated

from in the act of production itself, s/he is alienated from his/her species being and finally from his/her fellow human being.

For Marx the very concept of history is one of a world-creating process. Humanity has a conscious life activity as opposed to mere animal instinct. In this it is correct to say that the individual is a self-conscious social being by nature[243]. However, this may be negated by capitalism.

In the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" Marx encountered the question of the objectification of the species life of humanity. Marx outlines the inherent social nature of the labour process as the specific species-nature of humanity. Humanity when seen in this light has the profound creative ability to construct the future. Marx claimed there was a division of labour in each epoch into unequal sections controlled for the benefit of the ruling class, to the disadvantage of the producers. The disintegration of primitive communal production initiates the conditions suitable for the emergence of private property and with this comes the perennial division of exploiters and exploited.

> The division of labour is the economic expression of the social nature of labour within estrangement...the division of labour is nothing more than the estranged, alienated positing of human activity as a real species-activity or as activity of man as a species-being.[244]

Human beings were regarded by Marx as universal and free beings in that they were conscious of themselves as members of their own species and

could regard the whole of nature as their inorganic body[245]. While animals produce one-sidedly as a result of physical need, human beings produced many-sided in accordance with the 'laws of beauty'[246]. In capitalism however, the worker is not creative. Mechanisation turns work into a kind of torture and "deprives the work of all interest"[247]. The worker now becomes an appendage of the machine and his or her individual skills are no longer of any importance. As Marx puts it,

> What constitutes the alienation of labour? Firstly, the fact that labour is external to the worker, i.e. does not belong to his essential being; that he therefore does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable and not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind. Hence the worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working he does not feel himself. He is at home when he is not working, and not at home when he is working. His labour is therefore not voluntary but it is forced labour. [248]

Since the work is felt as degrading and not as an affirmation of individuality, the worker has no interest in the object s/he creates. Work is experienced as a miserable toil and human life appears to begin only where work ends. Under capitalist production those who do not have access to the means of production and who cannot sell the produce of their labour must instead sell their power to labour. In the production process Marx sees the wage relationship as concealed theft and a source of human alienation. He is

concerned with the conditions under which work - which is not alienated - becomes alienated. For Marx labour, productive life is man's species life. Our labour power is our vital species activity, it is what defines us as human; it is our ability to interact with nature[249] and each other and shape our world and ourselves. However, in capitalism both the product and activity of production are alienated from and alien to the individual producer. As Richard Schacht puts it,

> Marx terms labour "alienated" when it ceases to reflect one's own personality and interests, and instead comes under the direction of an "alien will", i.e., another man. As in the case of the product, he holds that it is the surrender of one's labour power to another man which severs the connection between one's labour and one's personality and interests...The alienation of labour and its "surrender" are so intimately related for Marx that he often employs the two formulations inter-changeably.[250]

In capitalism the workers neither raise their products in their imagination nor create according to the laws of beauty. All individuality is left behind. In capitalism therefore the worker is alienated both in the process of production and from the end product of the process. Marx condemned capitalism because in that mode of production the life activity of human beings, the ability to create, becomes for them the very thing which holds them in submission, instead of a liberating force. Although all classes in capitalism are alienated to some degree, one class in particular is alienated and this class is the proletariat. Members of the proletariat have no property but their

labour power which they must alienate, sell to the capitalist in order to stay alive. It is because the workers are forced to surrender themselves to another yoke (an alien will) that his/her personality becomes separated or alienated. Labour power (our vital species activity) is forcibly alienated and becomes a commodity (like any other) which the capitalist uses to produce other commodities[251]. In *Capital* Marx wrote that,

> the domination of the capitalist over the worker is thus the domination of the thing over man, of dead labour over living labour.[252]

Marx insists that present needs should be met before human beings turn their minds towards some perfect future society. This is why Marx's work was a critique of the present before being a prediction of the future. For Marx there is no point in writing in detail about the goods a future society will provide when a majority in the present world live in conditions where they have barely enough food and clothing to survive. By drawing attention to the misery faced by the proletariat under the capitalist system, Marx showed the necessity of changing the present mode of production.

However, capitalism obstructs, stunts and alienates this natural dependency. The onset of capitalism changes this ontology as each human being is looked upon as an atomistic human individual. Marx criticises the modern world which puts

> egoism and selfish need in the place of these species-bonds and dissolves man into a world of atomistic individuals with hostile attitudes toward each other.[253]

Marx criticised the atomistic view of man in the capitalist world. He talks about the egoistic individual inflating himself to the size of an atom.[254]

The way human beings relate in capitalism, the fact that they produce for profit and not for the needs of other human beings, is not natural. Egoistic man is motivated solely by self-interest. Instead of regarding other men as his fellows, he regards them as his rivals and adversaries: he is hostile to them. This is not natural -- it is alien. Nevertheless economists before Marx liked to present the individual of capitalism as the natural human being. They argued that the relations between individuals today are natural relations. This belief was found by Marx to be very naive. Marx made it clear that while he viewed human beings as social by nature, he also viewed them as individuals: but for Marx true individuality can not be realised in isolation from other individuals. He wrote that

> man is a *Zoon Politicon* in the most literal sense: he is not only a social animal, but an animal that can be individualised only within society. Production by a solitary individual outside society...is just as preposterous as the development of speech without individuals who live together and talk to one another.[255]

Marx regarded human beings as social by nature. He hoped for a society in which individuals wanted to create for others, where individuals wanted to give and not merely take. The communist individual by the nature of his/her society will be a generous individual and his/her behaviour may resemble that of the good samaritan. For Marx this social revolution can only be carried out by a class whose claims represent universal needs; this class is the proletariat. Alienation can only be transcended with the creation of a communist society, which will enable us to regain and unify these natural human endeavours, and regain and unify ourselves, becoming authentic or truly human.

4.5 Contradictions of Capitalism as Culmination of Alienation.

Marx thought that the distinction of use-value and (exchange) value is the source not only of an *understanding* of the mechanism of political economy, but also of a humanist *critique* of the alienated capitalist political economy. This is an example of Marx's naturalism, which involves the value-implication, in terms of humanism, of a materialist (realist) understanding. The concealed origin of the conflict between use-value and value is shown by Marx to be in the very nature of the commodity itself. But it develops into a visible contradiction in the form of the recurring economic crises of capitalism.

In general what happens in a crisis is that production for value ceases because it is unprofitable, even though there is a human need for the products, that is, they would still have use-value. Crises are caused both by

the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, and by overproduction, which occurs when there is no value (purchasing power) available in the market. They are a demonstration in the real world of the enormous potential for alienation of the system of production for (exchange) value. Crises show the irrationality of capitalist commodity production: that is they show the irrationality of capitalist rationality. It is not simply that bourgeois rationality, which is profit-making, is self-defeating in that as Marx says capital is a barrier to itself. More importantly, it is a contradiction of the human essence which reveals itself tangibly in the evidence of rotting food and starving people. All of this takes place because capitalist rationality is relativist; it is based on particular pleasure, not the universal good. True rationality on the contrary is spiritual and unifying.

Marx wished to show workers that the allegedly natural 'economic laws" of the bourgeois *market* are an ideological disguise for the scientifically ascertainable exploitative economic laws of bourgeois *production* to which they are subject every day. Science studies the "inner nature" and the "real motions" of a thing. It does not stop with perceptible motion, with mere contemplation. Marx was the first to try and formulate a science useful to revolutionary practice, when he wrote in 1845: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in different ways, the point is to change it".[256] The workers need to comprehend the real connection which is hidden behind the outward appearance, for we have to understand what we want to change.

To understand the basic structure of a social relationship scientifically, we cannot rely on common sense (everyday) ways of thinking. Norman Geras shows that Marx held the realist theory of science (akin to that of Roy

Bhaskar), that science is the discovery of the essence behind the appearance.[257] To comprehend a social phenomenon means to recognise its real essence. To achieve this understanding it is not enough just to describe the surface facts. We have to comprehend the inner connections and study their function in the complete system.

This truth is illustrated by Marx with an example from natural science. Every morning the sun rises in the East and every evening it sets in the West; this is at least how it appears and from this appearance people for thousands of years drew the conclusion that the earth was the fixed centre of the universe, around which the sun and all the other stars revolved. Copernicus, Kepler and Galileo proved the appearance wrong. So natural science clarified a causal power that was hidden, it unmasked laws which existed below the surface. Similarly Marx sought to uncover the hidden laws which governed human social life. Marx makes the comparison with natural science when he writes about the capitalist economy:

> A scientific analysis of competition is not possible before we have a conception of the inner nature of capital, just as the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies are not intelligible to any but him, who is acquainted with their real motions, motions which are not directly perceptible by the senses.[258]

In capitalism the interdependence of the producers is hidden behind the exchange of commodities. It is not a transparent relationship of personal dependence like that between the feudal landlord and serf, because now

social relations between people take the form of a relationship between things. Work is carried out by each producer in total independence of the others; the essential social character of the producer's labour manifests itself only in the eventual process of exchange; whether a worker's labour is valuable or not cannot be known until the product is sold, which may never become known to the worker.

By the value form Marx means the form of appearance of value. Value does not appear as such in the single individual commodity. Only if a commodity enters into exchange relations with others does it acquire, in the exchange-value it has against others, a form of appearance of its value: "We may twist and turn a single commodity as we wish; it remains impossible to grasp it as a thing possessing value".[259] For example a coat as a commodity only takes on the form of value when it is produced as a commodity for exchange. If it were simply produced to wear (for use, or as a use-value) then this would have nothing to do with *value*, only with the *use-value* it has for the wearer, because it fulfils a genuine human need. Exchange or circulation is therefore the process through which the value-form develops "from its simplest, almost imperceptible outline to the dazzling money-form".[260]

After more than a decade of study in the reading room of the British Museum, as well as informed observation of the economic fluctuations of the day, Marx reached a deeper understanding of the contradictions of capitalism, manifested in the scramble for profitability and the outbreak of periodic crises. Marx deals with these problems under two headings. In the first he was concerned with the tendency, known since Petty but never explained, of the rate of profit to fall, a long run tendency placing chronic

stress on the system. In the second he was concerned with the discrepancy between the production of surplus-value and its realisation; in other words he addressed the question of why crises broke out when they did.

In *Theories of Surplus Value* he wrote of the two forms of the destruction of capital which were symptomatic of crises. First, physical destruction such as rusting machinery, and second, depreciation of value as a result of the fall in prices of the commodities. Marx showed that at this stage finance capital enriched itself at the expense of industrial capital.

The theory of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall attempts to reveal the contradictions of capitalism at the level of the moving system as a whole. Marx summarised the expansionist dynamic of capitalism as 'the need to improve production and extend its scale, merely as a means of self-preservation, and on pain of going under', and the system operated under conditions which had become a 'natural law independent of the producers' and which was 'ever more uncontrollable'.[261] Marx argued that the expansionist dynamic necessarily involved massive and regular dislocation, and any periods of equilibrium were only won after the violent purge of a major crisis. He believed that the pressures which the system brought on itself provided the long-term tendency which rendered crises inevitable.

Marx saw that the true barrier to capitalist production is capital itself, for attempts to valorise capital come constantly into contradiction with the methods of production necessary for the unlimited expansion of capital. Crises themselves were, in a temporary way at least, resolutions to the contradictions of capitalist production, resolutions which were carried

through at an enormous cost in human life, great waste and hardship. They were violent solutions for the existing contradictions which, for the time being, restored the disturbed balance. Marx makes no attempt to hide his hatred for the system. He states that the system depended on the dispossession and impoverishment of the great mass of producers and insisted that the whole process was perverse and alien because production only extended when it could produce a profit and not in order to satisfy human needs. He demonstrated that the propensity of capitalism to develop the powers of production and to create a world market -- its 'historic task' -- was in 'constant contradiction' to its 'social relations of production'.[262]

Can such a conclusion be justified when capitalism continues to survive crises and dramatically increases the intensity and scope of its production over one hundred years after Marx's death? The continued existence of capitalism does not in itself vitiate Marx's arguments about its contradictory nature. Marx considered that if a stage of perfect monopoly was reached then production would cease. However, the modern system of production is still a considerable way from a position of exclusive monopoly and it would be entirely wrong to think that Marx envisaged a 'breakdown' to come about for purely economic reasons alone. Clearly market mechanisms can be maintained by force, by government use of anti-trust legislation. While the centralisation of capital and the widespread intervention of the state in the market have contributed to the continued expansion of the system, neither attempt to overcome the innate contradictions has been able to prevent international crises. However the intervention in the market by governments at least opens up the conditions for political action to secure a rational, human system of planned production for need.

4.6 Marx and Justice.

Allen Wood and Robert Tucker argue that Marx did not criticise capitalism for being unjust.[263] According to Wood, Marx says that the justice or injustice of an economic transaction just is its corresponding or failing to correspond with the rules of the prevailing mode of production. Wood's theory is not condoning capitalist exploitation. But he writes that

> although capitalist exploitation alienates, dehumanises and degrades wage labourers it does not violate any of their rights, and there is nothing about it which is wrongful or unjust.[264]

However, he argues that for Marx justice is merely a juridical concept. The juridical point of view is, says Wood, 'essentially one sided' and if we adopt it to try to change the overall social reality, we have a distorted conception of that reality. Wood argues correctly that any talk of just distribution within a capitalist system is pointless. For in capitalism, distribution is ultimately determined by production and if the capitalist exploits the worker, such is the nature of capitalist production.

But if not in the cause of justice, why then did Marx condemn capitalism? Wood argues that Marx's condemnation of capitalism is not moral; in fact, that Marx's critique of capitalism is "immoralist". He maintains that Marx condemns capitalism in the light of certain values such as freedom, self-

realisation and community. Wood does not believe that human will and values have no role to play in revolution; he does not ascribe to Marx some deterministic viewpoint, according to which 'objective' economic laws propel capitalism towards its own demise. Wood, unusually among interpreters of Marx, points out that Marx does not think that any science, including his own, is value-free.

But Wood claims that Marx observed a distinction (which Wood asserts is widely recognised) between moral and non-moral goods. Moral goods include such things as the fulfilment of duty, right, justice and virtue, while non-moral goods include freedom, self-realisation, community, health, comfort etc. Non-moral goods satisfy our needs and wants, whereas moral goods tell us what to do. Moral goods are pursued solely on account of the merit attached to them, whereas non-moral goods are desirable even when abstracted from praise or blame. Wood goes on to relate Marx on the one hand to Kant, who also recognised the difference between moral and non-moral goods, and on the other hand to Mill who, according to Wood, argued that the non-moral good is the overriding factor. For Wood this means that whilst Marx believed that capitalism was just he could nonetheless call for its overthrow.

But the immoralism thesis is completely mistaken about Marx. Marx complains of the division between political economy and "Cousin Morality" and attributes it to alienation.

> It is inherent in the very nature of estrangement that each sphere imposes upon me a different and contrary

> standard: one standard for morality, one for political economy, and so on. This is because each of them is a particular estrangement of man and each is centred upon one particular area of estranged activity.[265]

Husami rightly points out that

> Tucker and Wood misconstrue the Marxian sociology of morals by failing to note that elements of the superstructure, such as conceptions of justice, have two levels of determination. By focusing on the social determination of norms to the exclusion of their class determination, they are led to believe that for Marx a norm is just when it accords with a mode of production and unjust when it discords with that mode. They overlook Marx's relation of moral conceptions within the same mode of production to the opposed social classes.[266]

However, much of Wood's thesis is highly pertinent. He quite rightly emphasises how bourgeois justice should be seen within a wider context of capitalist economic and social order.[267] He also reminds us about the futility of appealing to capitalism's own juridical structures if we seek revolutionary change. Marx does insist on seeing juridical and ideological structures as emanating from the economic base and that these structures will legitimise and perpetuate the exploitation at the heart of the wage relationship. But it cannot be concluded that there is no room for justice in Marx's

condemnation of and alternative to capitalism. Norman Geras insightfully points out that

> There is a parallel to be noted here between Marx's treatment of the apparent equivalence in the wage contract and his treatment of the freedom the worker enjoys in choosing to enter that contract. For the worker may appear to do this quite voluntarily and the sphere of circulation be therefore, 'a very Eden of the innate rights of man...the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham'. But the reality is different...The supposed justice of the wage relation is comparable, then, to the workers' freedom in it. It is an appearance whose real content or essence is a radically different one.[268]

Marx's point is not to say that the capitalist is justified but rather that the theft is 'just' in terms of bourgeois law. With Husami, a critic of Wood, we can ask why he thinks justice is class bound, yet freedom is not.[269] We could further ask how community and self-realisation are not class bound. Wood's comparison of Marx to Kant and to Mill is surely tenuous, as the view of human nature of both Kant and the utilitarians is the same bourgeois view of human nature as egoistic, selfish, a-social; this is what Meszaros calls "a socially motivated unhistorical assumption of absolutes".[270] It is only man formed by bourgeois society who is alienated and acts egoistically, but the bourgeois philosopher takes that deformation of human nature as the eternal nature of man. He stands outside of history and asserts that this is how man always will be. The particular bourgeois alienated version of man is

universalised.[271]

The passage in *Capital* where Marx states that the theft of half a day's labour may be good luck for the buyer but is 'nowise an injustice' to the seller seems to give irrefutable support to Wood's argument. But Marx's meaning in his choice of words is precise; he does not say "nowise an injustice to the worker". The wage can be just to the seller as seller, insofar as any buying and selling is just. But the theft of labour is unjust to the worker as human being.

Marx's whole account here is ironic; in the next passage Marx speaks about the capitalist laughing and the worker fooled. He continues

Our capitalist foresaw this state of things and that was the cause of his laughter...The trick has at last succeeded; money has been converted into capital.[272]

Marx's point here is that the relationship is not just but that the bourgeoisie call it so, in an attempt to trick the workers. Marx writes that[273]

> so long as one is a bourgeois, one cannot but see in this relation of antagonism a relation of harmony and eternal justice, which allows no one to gain at the expense of the other.

Marx refers to the "mysticism" of the wage relationship.[274] Once we see beyond the mysticism we come to understand the trickery and illusion, the

sleight of hand. Without the mysticism we can see that in fact capitalism is robbery and theft. Marx writes in the "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts"

> Vis-a-vis his employer the worker is not at all in the position of a free seller...The capitalist is always free to employ labour, and the worker is always forced to sell it.[275]

The worker has to enter into a contract with the capitalist; the appearance is freedom but the reality is compulsion. The worker is robbed of labour-power, his vital species activity, in order that the capitalist may go on making profit.

Husami states

> Tucker and Wood sunder the bogus passage from its context and in consequence, fail to ask what Marx means by the "trick" of exploiting labour power... If the capitalist robs the worker, then he appropriates what is not rightfully his own or he appropriates what rightfully belong to the worker. Thus there is no meaningful sense in which the capitalist can simultaneously rob the worker and treat him justly. But Tucker and Wood, having failed to take note of the "trick" and its meaning, roundly - and falsely – declare that the worker, though exploited, is not cheated or robbed or treated unjustly.[276]

Against Allen Wood's notion of justice as what suits a mode of production, Marx's universal justice is about classlessness. This leads to a view of justice as equal to love and generosity in production based on human need, especially the greatest human need - the need for love. Marx following Plato in the dialectical tradition, was interested not only in a better theory of justice, but even more, in a theory of a better justice, a higher kind of justice. This is what he described as the realisation or actualisation of philosophy.[277] Among Husami's many convincing contributions to the debate is his view that

> To begin with, Marx would tell Wood that the so-called juridical point of view is a pernicious abstraction: whose juridical point of view? Surely, the spokesmen of the capitalist class would want to evaluate capitalist practices from the standpoint of capitalist juridical relations because these relations are expressive of a system of private property which is in the interest of the capitalist class. And when they do, as in the labour contract, they regard wages as the price of labour (not of labour power – that is a Marxian distinction not found in capitalist laws); that is, they consider the worker compensated for the whole working day. Marx says that capitalist juridical relations mask the exploitation of the workers. Hence he did not base his evaluation of capitalism on these relations.[278]

In communism there would be equality or justice in the real wealth of loving human relations. Therefore Marx criticised capitalism from a higher viewpoint. Under the capitalist mode of production the proletariat suffers universal injustice, 'total loss of humanity'.[279] Marx can validly use proletarian or post-capitalist standards, including standards of justice, in evaluating capitalism. He writes:

> From the standpoint of a higher economic form of society, private ownership of the globe by single individuals will appear quite as absurd as private ownership of one man by another. Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its possessors, its usufructaries, and, like *boni patres familias*, they must hand it down in an improved condition.[280]

For Marx, communism would be an end to all antagonisms and dichotomies. There would be no classes, no division between mental and manual labour, and no great inequalities in wealth. The establishment of communism would be as Marx states in his early writings both the abolition and realisation of philosophy, the "resurrection of nature",[281] and "the total redemption of humanity".[282]

4.7 Marx: Freedom (Positive and Negative) and "The Rights of Man".

One of Marx's central objections to capitalism is that under it people are not free.[283] Freedom is one of the central values of Marx, and the slavery of the

overwhelming majority of mankind under capitalism is one of the central reasons for his vehement condemnation of it. Marx writes

> Labour is life, and if life is not exchanged everyday for food it suffers and soon perishes. If human life is to be regarded as a commodity, we are forced to admit slavery.[284]

Capitalist society developed out of feudal society and its claims to freedom must be understood in this historical context. Capitalism is only 'free' in contrast to the compulsory guild membership, or ecclesiastical regulation, with the tariffs and prohibitions which characterised the mode of production which preceded capitalism. Capitalist society views itself as free because it permits competition which is free from these barriers. Hence for Marx " it is not individuals who are set free by free competition; it is, rather, capital which is set free".[285]

The freedom of capital is the freedom of the bourgeoisie to exploit the proletariat. The liberty which the bourgeois proclaim as human freedom is nothing but their freedom. For the proletariat the reality of this freedom is slavery. In Marx's view reforms of the capitalist system which aim at extending or realising freedom as understood within capitalism are of no value. Under capitalism the proletariat live in inhuman conditions and are only given enough of the necessities of life to keep them alive so that they may be exploited.[286]

Capitalist society presupposes the antagonistic interests of different classes

as well as different individuals; the lives of individuals under capitalism are one-sided and deformed; people are impoverished, both physically and spiritually by their work; and personal relations are dissolved into money relations. In Marx's eyes freedom requires not simply the lack of social coercion; like Plato he believes in a life of self-development within rational and harmonious relations with others. In this sense Marx's concept of freedom is social, collective and positive.[287]

For Marx freedom is realised in different segments of our lives e.g. within our production and daily concerns, as well as at times when one is released from these. Freedom within the productive segment of our lives can only consist in socialised humans, 'the associated producers', rationally regulating our interchange with nature, bringing it under our common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, our human nature.[288]

The bourgeois notion of freedom is a political, individual, and negative notion;[289] individuals are free to the extent that they are not prevented by others or the state from pursuing any desires they may have. But Marx's is a positive notion of freedom as rational self-government in community, the loss of which is alienation.

In his essay "Two Concepts of Liberty" Isaiah Berlin draws a distinction between negative and positive freedom. Berlin's definition of negative freedom is a vacuum in which no obstacles obstruct the desires of the individual.

> I am normally said to be free to the degree to which no human being interferes with my activity. Political liberty in this sense is simply the area within which a man can do what he wants. If I am prevented by other persons from doing what I want I am to that degree unfree; and if the area within which I can do what I want is contracted by other men beyond a certain minimum, I can be described as being coerced, or, it may be, enslaved.... By being free in this sense I mean not being interfered with by others. The wider the area of non-interference the wider my freedom.[290]

Negative liberty is understood as an absence of direct physical interference with acting in accordance with our choices. Hence chains, enslavement and direct physical domination are considered as impediments to negative liberty, but domination by withholding the means of life or the means of labour is not, as for Berlin these are outside of the province of liberty altogether. Here Berlin seems to be talking about the freedom of the 'rights of man' which Marx scathingly attacked in his article "On the Jewish Question".[291] Marx criticised the atomistic view of man in the capitalist world. He talks about the egoistic individual inflating himself to the size of an atom. Marx states that in bourgeois society,

> [T]he right of man to freedom is not based on the association of man with man but rather on the separation of man from man...The practical application of the right

> of man to freedom is the right of man to private property...The right of private property is therefore the right to enjoy and dispose of one's resources as one wills, without regard for other men and independently of society: the right of self-interest.[292]

For Berlin the notion of positive freedom is self-government or self-determination. According to Berlin, in desiring positive freedom

> I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be an instrument of my own, not of other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, conscious purposes which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were, from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer, deciding, not being decided for, self-directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men as if I was a thing, or an animal, or a slave incapable of playing a human role, that is, of conceiving goals and policies of my own and realising them.[293]

Marx in his criticism of the subjection of people to things and the subjugation of men to other men or, in the case of capitalists to their passions, which should be under their control, also clearly espouses positive freedom in this sense. In his speech to the *People's Paper* he expresses it

> In our days everything seems pregnant with its contrary. Machinery, gifted with wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it. The new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want. The victories of art seem bought by loss of character. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy.[294]

Berlin believes that these two forms of liberty are 'not two different interpretations of a single concept, but two profoundly divergent and irreconcilable attitudes to the ends of life'.[295] The self mastery of positive freedom which includes control of desires, passions, conflicts with Berlin's definition of negative freedom, which is the absence of obstacles to fulfil these desires. If freedom is merely the absence of obstacles to the desires of the individual then freedom is compatible with determination by those desires -- and unfreedom would be any impediment to the fulfilment of the desires which in fact determine our behaviour. So Berlin's notion of negative freedom is compatible with determinism, whereas according to the positive notion of freedom, if something is determined then it is by definition not free.

Marx's rejection of 'the rights of man' in favour of positive liberty is precisely a rejection of Berlin's view of the primacy of an untrammelled negative freedom. However, Marx was in no way antagonistic towards individual freedom: as he emphasised, in communism 'the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all'.[296]

Marx was concerned with the freedom of human beings to become human by becoming free from capitalist social relations. Marx's conception of freedom includes the best of both the negative and positive aspects of liberty in a way that Berlin's sharp division of freedom does not allow. The rejection of the bourgeois property-oriented 'freedom' of the 'rights of man' does not entail rejection of the freedom of the individual.

In *Democratic Theory* C.B. Macpherson criticises Berlin's division of liberty. He accepts Berlin's initial definition of positive liberty but rejects his definition of negative liberty because it is based on the egoistic view of man and society.[297] He points out that when Berlin draws a distinction between liberty and the conditions of liberty, saying that the mere inability to attain a goal does not in itself denote a lack of freedom to attain it, Berlin seems to have held that the lack of 'the means of life and labour' is not a lack of freedom but rather a lack of the conditions necessary for exercising that freedom. If as a result of poverty someone cannot eat and as a result cannot work, then according to Berlin's theory the person would still be free. For Berlin this is only a diminution of the conditions of freedom, not of freedom itself. This is because of the narrowness of Berlin's definition of negative freedom -- freedom from impediments to the carrying out of whatever one happens to wish.

Macpherson describes Berlin's concept of negative liberty as being 'mechanical and inertial' like Hobbes's, involving isolated individuals in an atomised market in which everyone is competing with everyone else for everything else — the war of all against all.[298] Berlin's account of freedom is

a result of his view of human nature.

Macpherson would agree with Marx that real community and freedom would only be possible when we consciously identify with each other, or share various experiences, ends, and activities. For if we only identify with our own private needs or desires then we are neither a member of a community nor free. We are only members of community by virtue of the fact that we treat others as an essential part of ourselves and thus identify with the needs and desires of each other. Self-development, self-mastery and freedom are only ever achievable when others play a part in our lives.[299]

Macpherson replaces Berlin's two concepts of liberty with two concepts of power: developmental power and extractive power. Extractive power is the ability to extract benefit from others for yourself. Macpherson suggests that 'the measure of liberty is the absence of extractive power".[300] He defines negative liberty as immunity from the extractive power of others, while positive liberty is still individual self-direction and action. Macpherson now rephrases these as 'counter-extractive liberty' and 'developmental liberty'. Unlike Berlin's two concepts there is a close connection between the two as counter-extractive liberty is a prerequisite of developmental liberty.

Marx believed that the negative liberty of the rights of man involves the power to exploit. Because political life in capitalism is an abstraction from the real life of civil society, political freedom lacks real content. It is possible for an individual to possess negative freedom in this sense and yet lack the access to the means of subsistence necessary for freedom in its positive aspect. As Marx points out, "an Irish peasant is merely free to eat potatoes,

bad ones at that, or to starve; except, of course, on those occasions when he is only free to starve".[301]

From his early writings as a journalist until his later writings such as *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* Marx was critical of talk about rights, precisely because truly just relations could not be realised in the capitalist world, whereas the realisation of property rights in the real world was precisely capitalism. Marx wrote that "the proletariat certainly cannot become interested in the present rights"[302] but he repeatedly argued that they should campaign for certain demands; the right to vote, right of assembly and freedom of the press. While he rejects the 'freedom' of the 'rights of man', he does not reject negative freedom as such. Marx was concerned with the freedom of men to become human by becoming free from capitalist social relations. As Marx puts it:

> Therefore not one of the so-called rights of man goes beyond egoistic man, man as a member of civil society, namely an individual withdrawn into himself, his private interest and his private desires and separated from the community. In the rights of man it is not man who appears as a species being; on the contrary, species-life itself, society, appears as a framework extraneous to the individuals, as a limitation of their original independence. The only bond which holds them together is natural necessity, need and private interest, the conservation of their property and their egoistic persons.[303]

Marx argued in "On the Jewish Question" that when reference is made to rights and justice it is usually for selfish reasons. For example in *The Critique of the Gotha Programme* he criticised the workers' belief that they had a right to the entire proceeds of their labour; not only as nonsense (within the capitalist system) but also and very importantly as selfish. [304] Marx's view of rights and justice is based on his view of the human being as a communal being.[305] An individual can only have rights when regarded as a social individual. The highest expression of this is in the production process where man/woman realises his/her human nature by producing for the needs of all.

> When communist artisans associate with one another, theory, propaganda, etc. is their first end. But at the same time, as a result of this association, they acquire a new need - the need for society - and what appears as a means becomes an end. In this practical process the most splendid results are observed... Such things as smoking, drinking, eating, etc., are no longer means of contact or means that bring them together. Association, society and conversation, which again has association as its end, are enough for them; the brotherhood of man is no mere phrase with them, but a fact of life, and the *nobility* of man shines upon us from their work-hardened bodies [my emphasis].[306]

This quotation, with its contrast of enslavement and nobility, like his speech to the *People's Paper*, illustrates Marx's crucial ontological theme of

alienation (commodification, fetishism) and its overcoming in the positive freedom of authentic communal human existence.

Chapter 5. The Particular and the Universal: Relativism and Rationality in Existentialism and Contemporary Philosophy.

5.1 Existentialism.

Value relativism in the form of a rejection of the universality of judgments of the valuable, the good, the ideal etc. and an assertion of the relativity of values to the particular valuer has survived Marx's criticism, partly because Marx's thought has been corrupted by mechanism and its attendant relativism. Existentialism, which was so popular during most of the 20th century, is an obvious form of such relativism. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were ancestors of twentieth century existentialism, and Nietzsche in particular is also an ancestor of post-modernism. They are both opponents of a universalising rationality. Nietzsche opposed as universalism not only science and even logic, but democracy and socialism, all as restrictions on the freedom of the aesthetic human spirit. His right-wing anarchism echoes the sentiments of Plato's Callicles. Kierkegaard also opposed democracy and socialism, and sought refuge in an individualistic and frankly irrational approach to religion. However his rejection of bourgeois "Christendom"

allowed him to pay attention to the ontological dimension of human existence.

Kierkegaard exaggerates and even reifies the limits of the ability to argue rationally with others that they should be moral or spiritual. He turns these into three possible stages (levels, spheres, dimensions) of life.[307] These form a hierarchy in which the higher is better or more spiritual than the lower. He starts off with what he calls the aesthetic stage. Here Don Juan, the hedonist, is the typical example. This also ties in with the hedonism of Bentham's utilitarianism, the greatest happiness (measurable pleasure) of the greatest number. The time element of this stage is the moment; living for the moment is the keynote of this way of life. Pleasure is the master and is equated with happiness. This could in principle be measured (for instance by machines like the lie detector or the dolorimeter) in terms of electrical impulses in nervous tissue causing sensations. The category of this stage is the *particular*.

The second stage which Kierkegaard believes we can rise to is the moral or ethical stage. Here as in the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, the model person is the citizen who obeys the laws of the state. This stage is caught up in statism and legalism. The ideal is the judge who interprets and follows the law, seen as a legacy from the past to be passed on improved to the future; past, present and future are the time element of this stage. This also includes the Kantian universality of 'doing your duty for duty's sake' which however Kant, unlike Kierkegaard, sees as the content of religion. The category of this stage is the *universal.*

The third stage which Kierkegaard analyses is the religious stage (in a more secular mode it might be seen as the ontological or spiritual stage). He believes that it is only in this stage that we can become what he calls 'a self'. The judge and Don Juan are incapable of achieving this. The self is authenticity; the self is responsible for becoming an individual self, which is a synthesising of the finite and infinite in one's being. This stage of life does not confine itself to the moment, or to past, present and future time, as do the particular and the universal stages; it opens one's self to the eternal. It is only in this religious (or, I would say, ontological) stage that I enter into a true relationship to God and attain the category of this stage, which is *individuality*.

The importance of these three stages to the issue of rationality and relativism is that for Kierkegaard one cannot rationally explain or prove to someone who abides by the 'values' of the lower stages that they should rise up to the higher. Kierkegaard insists that reason cannot get you there, rather it requires a leap of faith. Don Juan will not accept your reasons for living morally—you are talking a different language from him. So in this schema it is only the higher which can understand the lower: the lower simply cannot comprehend the higher; unless it is lucky enough to experience something in life which forces a change of direction (conversion), or unless the person makes the leap of faith.

The essence of this position poses difficulties for those who would argue for a model of rational human life as opposed to a relativist one. One who believes that the ontological stage is the best and most rational life can only explain it rationally to another if that person breaks through to this way of

living. But if the other breaks through, one will not need to give reasons. However if the other cannot break through then one cannot give what the other would term satisfactory reasons. Rather the other will charge that this form of life is simply what one believes, motivated by a will to believe (and indeed to control), and as such is relative to me (that is relative to my will or pleasure). Nevertheless one must continue to appeal to the other's reason with reason, even if only by saying with Jaspers that we must have 'faith in reason', but in a higher and wider reason than, say, the rationality of 'economic man' or the Enlightenment progressivist positivist.

Kierkegaard's hierarchical schema of spheres of existence and his insistence on a 'leap of faith', is important, and can be used as a counter attack not only against empiricist relativism's crude levelling and reductive stance, but against Kant's reduction of the religious dimension to the moral, and Hegel's reduction of the religious to the secular; against them Kierkegaard needed to posit an autonomous religious sphere. However it can be said he did so at the expense of rationality, and by restricting universality to an alleged separate sphere of morality, without an ontological dimension. It continues German Idealism's theme of the divorce of nature (both the stage of hedonism and that of morality) and spirit (the religious stage). It can thus also be said to be at the expense of the traditional and adequate concept of nature.

As I have already said, Nietzsche's irrationalism is akin to that of Callicles in the Gorgias. Postmodernists who expand his term "genealogy" to include any source or origin are misrepresenting and Bowdlerising him. His meaning is specific: values are generated by one of only two kinds, masters or slaves.[308] Masters evaluate people in terms of the good and the no-good

or bad. In a chiasm of this evaluation the no-good slaves evaluate themselves as the good, and their masters as the evil ones. Nietzsche adopts the ontology of Callicles: natural justice is the rule of the stronger. In fact, his is a morality without justice, and he is "suspicious" of justice as an attempt to clip his wings. It is not surprising that his right-wing anarchism should have an appeal in a particularly right-wing phase of the bourgeois era, and it certainly should have no part to play in a reconstruction of Marx's thought.

5 .2 Sartre: From Relativism to Rationality?

The complexities and difficulties involved in the contemporary debate between proponents of a universal rationality and proponents of relativism is evident in the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre, from his early existentialism to his later attempt to fuse that with Marxism. The later Sartre believes he can combine his early thought, which admittedly is in the dialectical tradition and not the empiricist one, with Marxism to provide an existential philosophy which opens onto a dialectical understanding.

One could describe the early Sartre as advocating a radically relativist epistemology based on his radical ontology. Sartre sees human beings as necessarily totally responsible for creating themselves. For him the self is detachable from its social and historical roles and status to such a degree that the self can have no history, just a future in which it is forced to make itself. Sartre, like Pico della Mirandola in the 'Oration on the dignity of man' affirms an exceptional position for human beings in the universe. They are

free in that they are not, as other things are, tied to a determinate nature, but rather have the power to assume any nature. Pico makes a decisive break with the older Platonic order and prepares the way for a stage where the ends of human life will no longer be defined in relation to a cosmic order at all, but must be invented or chosen. Pico, however, still retains a hierarchical order in which man in choosing to assume a nature, either debases or exalts himself.

For the early Sartre the world is a meaningless positivity. It is the *en-soi*, a plenum. Man wants to impose meaning on the world absolutely: man necessarily wants to be God but "God" (the '*pour-soi en-soi*') is impossible; "man is a futile passion".[309] All humans want to be the unique consciousness for whom all others are objects. In principle he asserts that we all would like to be (like God) the source of ourselves (*causa sui*) and of everything, but we know we are not, we know we are contingent and finite. Nevertheless, in a finite way we are Gods, in that we create all values for ourselves. So values are not out there in the universe or in God. For Sartre all values come from the subjective consciousness just as for Hume all values are "in the breast". Also like Camus, Sartre believes that the individual subject's consciousness gives all meaning and value and that these have no relevance to anybody else's. The individual's consciousness, he says, makes a hole in being like a worm eating through an apple.

Although Sartre's theory of consciousness derives from the dialectical tradition through Hegel it shares with Hobbes a theory of a 'war to the death' of all individuals, but as consciousnesses; for Sartre love is impossible, and 'Hell is other people'. Kojeve's interpretation of the master-slave dialectic of

Hegel (Hegel's version of Hobbesianism) greatly influenced Sartre. For Sartre to love another is to want to make that consciousness a slave, and to want to be loved by a slave is self-defeating -- a slave's love is worthless. In fact Sartre is closer to the Nietzschean account of slaves and masters than to Hegel's reconciliationist account.

The early Sartre is like the empiricists in seeing consciousness as infinitely malleable, but in his case existentially (subjectively) and by itself, not causally (objectively) by the environment. There is no rationality in which humanity participates or shares. Unlike Aquinas he sees no link between God and Man through a participation in Reason (Mind, intellect or *Nous*). If, for instance, I say that 'killing the innocent is wrong' I would merely be giving this statement my subjective force: it is not a universal law which all rational people should agree on and observe. Killing the innocent has only the disvalue that I give it. One could say in Protagoras's words, what is true for me is true for me, and what is true for you is true for you. Other than this there is no truth *per se*. Sartre says we are condemned to create values without foundation; 'we are condemned to be free'.

Of course Sartre recognises that our freedom is situated. He writes

> ...man is defined first of all as a being in a situation. That means that he forms a synthetic whole with his biological, economic, political, cultural, etc. situation... it is he who gives it meaning by making his choices within it and by it. To be in a situation... is to choose oneself in a situation, and men differ from one another in their situations and

> also in the choices they themselves make of themselves.[310]

As proof that reason cannot ground choices, he tells the story of a student who needs advice. The student is undecided as to whether he should join the resistance or look after his sick mother. Now for Sartre there is no right choice to make. He presupposes that morality must be able to prescribe one right, or just course of action in any circumstances. In this case it transparently cannot. The student must simply make a choice. Sartre draws from this particular hard case a universal conclusion:

> we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself.[311]

Sartre misunderstands morality on this point. For a morality in the Platonic/Aristotelian/Stoic/Thomist tradition of rationality, the student must simply do something good or at least not bad. Either choice in Sartre's example would be good. There is therefore no moral problem with either particular choice, as long as the student understands the consequences and undertakes the potentially tragic responsibilities of his choice. In addition, the situation contains other possible choices, such as collaborating with the Nazis, which morality can easily rule out. So in fact a universal rational morality can deal with what Sartre thinks of as an insoluble dilemma for any morality. This disproves his argument for the falsity of all claims to rationality for morality.

For Sartre, to believe in human nature at all is to believe that there is

something outside Man that establishes for Man a 'nature'. For him this something must be God. Since there can be no God it follows that there is no human nature. There are therefore no given meanings or values for humans. But Sartre himself posits as a given that humans have no essence. He also seems to posit another given or universal, that all humans are essentially free. Reliance on universalism is thus shown to be inescapable even for Sartre's statement of relativism.

Sartre's early philosophy echoes the individualist relativism and antagonism of Hobbes. But in *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946) he changed his position from one of total arbitrariness of radical choice for the self, to one of the necessity of a universal choice for all humanity. The choice for oneself of a communist trade union is for him a choice of revolution as the essence of humanity, whereas the choice of a Catholic trade union is a statement that resignation and patience are the proper human values. This essay is the hinge between the early and late Sartre. His turn to Marxism involved seeking a rapprochement with essentialism or universalism. But this is a contradiction that Sartre himself cannot escape. Until the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*[312] Sartre believed that we were governed neither by mechanical necessity nor by binding rational norms; rather there is just choice or freedom. But his later philosophy aspires to a kind of rationality and universal values; the radical choice you make should be guided by the idea of choosing for humanity. What he insists we must choose for humanity is freedom. However, since Sartre insists that the slave is as free as the master, his claim in the essay that willing freedom requires willing the freedom of others is an idle one, since everyone, slave and master, is already free in Sartre's sense.

5.3 Rawls: Freedom and Justice the Same Thing i.e. the Market.

Like Hobbes, John Rawls claims that rationality involves the absence of an interest in one another's interests.[313] To a great extent he accepts utilitarianism's theory of morality as social engineering—a means to survival in order to gain pleasure. Justice is seen only as a limit to the calculation of utility such as would be accepted by any totally self-interested person.

Rawls seems to think it is sufficient to differ from utilitarianism to call his own philosophy a natural law theory.[314] But it is not sufficient, on my understanding of natural law. For Rawls has a view of human nature which necessitates a social contract and his political ontology is very similar to the views of both the ancient sophists as portrayed by Glaucon in the *Republic*[315] and modernists like Hobbes[316] and Locke, as well as of Robert Nozick[317], with whose basic human ontology he agrees.

Rawls, like Bentham, believes that each individual is determined by nature to seek his/her own interests, and is rationally justified in doing so[318]. Also even though he claims to supersede the utilitarian view of the nature of justice he does not disagree with them on much else. Rawls points out that for the utilitarians morality is subordinate to political economy - but his own theory has a similar tendency. His contractualist natural law theory of the 'right' accepts the 'good' of the capitalist market - utilitarianism, the maximisation of pleasure[319]. His theory of justice is non-moral; morality is only to be decided *after* the rational agent enters the contract. This I believe

stems from his divorce of the right and the good and his bourgeois definition of (what is really 'economic') rationality as 'having no interest in one another's interests'. Rawls's model of man is *homo economicus*, economic man; the market model of mankind prevails here. His explicit assumption is that institutional inequalities which affect our whole 'life prospects' are inevitable in any society. His theory of 'justice' is explicitly anti-perfectionist and is in principle based on what he was the first to call a 'thin' theory of the good which shares the same motivation (scepticism about the rational defensibility of values) as political neutrality and the reduction of justice to proceduralism i.e. rights. He believes in the supremacy of 'the right' over 'the good' which indicates a bias towards the Cartesian dichotomy which divorces the good as utilitarian from the right as Kantian. Unlike Raz and others like John Finnis, Rawls does not cater for 'thick' (or rich) goods like knowledge, truth or beauty.

Rawls's reductive account of justice is merely procedural (he likens it to dividing up a cake 'fairly', as one would if one were sure to receive the last piece); and it favours the right over the good. Principles of procedural justice like Rawls's underpin class division and do not go very deep in order to discover the nature of injustice. For in Rawls's society he recognises there will still have to be inequality, not only between individual incomes but between the life prospects of the different classes. It is this assumption of class division which makes Rawls's theory a narrow, *thin* conception of justice based on formal competitive rights and 'fairness'.

Rawls's theory assumes a priori a social setting in which each individual is seen as determined by nature to seek his/her own interests, and is rationally

justified in doing so. He argues that the principles of justice are those which would be chosen by a rational agent, for whom rationality implies self-interestedness, 'having no interest in one another's interests'.[320]

The idea at the heart of John Rawls's theory of justice in *A Theory of Justice* is that of the 'original position' of an agent situated behind a 'veil of ignorance'. This would mean that the agent does not know what place in society s/he will occupy. Nor will agents know what class they will have, or what talents or ability they will possess. Furthermore they can have no conception of what their idea of the good, or their aim(s) in life will be, what temperament they will have, or what kind of economic, political, cultural or social order they will inhabit. According to Rawls, from behind this 'veil of ignorance' the proposed agents would, if they were rational, define a just distribution of goods in terms of two principles, and of a rule for allocating priorities when the two principles conflict. These would be, as Rawls puts it,

> [1] Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. [2] Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the joint savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and parties open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.[321]

For Rawls the first principle has priority over the second. The general rule for allocating priorities would be:

> All social primary goods - liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect - are to be distributed equally unless an equal distribution of any or all of these goods is to the advantage of the least favoured.[322]

These two principles of justice are said by Rawls not to be the only criteria by which a society should be judged but nonetheless they are to be an important part of it: "Justice is not to be confused with an all-inclusive vision of good society; it is only part of such a conception".[323] Rawls makes it a presupposition of his view that human beings must expect to disagree with each other about what the good life is. The rational agent, when deciding how goods of society are to be distributed, must consider only those goods in which everyone takes an interest, irrespective of their view of the good life. So in Rawls's theory of justice the good and the right are wholly separate.[324] The good is substantive and the right is procedural.

From the two principles and the general rule, the rational agent would be able to judge the basic structure of any society: the political constitution and economic and social institutions. Rawls believes that together these define a person's liberties and rights, life chances, what s/he may expect to be, and how well they may expect to fare.[325] A model of a just society which would satisfy his two principles of justice is a constitutional democracy, in which

> the government regulates a free economy in a certain way. More fully, if law and government act effectively to

> keep markets competitive, resources fully employed, property and wealth widely distributed over time, and if they maintain the appropriate social minimum welfare, and if there is equality of opportunity underwritten by education for all, the resulting distribution will be just.[326]

Rawls's is a 'contractarian' concept of justice, which he refers to as a natural law concept as opposed to the utilitarian one. Rawls claims to supersede the utilitarian view of justice, but he does not disagree with them on much else. He points out that for the utilitarians morality is subordinate to political economy -- the substantive good has nothing to do with procedural justice. His contractualist natural law theory agrees in fact with the 'morality' of the capitalist market – which is in essence utilitarianism, the maximisation of pleasure.[327] His theory of justice is non-moral; the question of morality is only to be decided after the rational agent enters the contract. This I believe stems from his divorce of the right and the good and his bourgeois definition of rationality as 'having no interest in one another's interests'.[328]

For Rawls, it is irrelevant how those who are now in grave need came to be in grave need; justice is a matter of present patterns of distribution to which the past is irrelevant. It is not surprising then that Rawls includes social classes and economic incentives as part of the a priori principles of justice. As C. B. MacPherson in *Democratic Theory* comments:

> [Rawls] assumes that inequality of income will always be necessary in such a society as an incentive to efficient production and that, therefore, welfare-state transfer

> payments must be limited to an amount which will still leave one class better off than another.[329]

His explicit assumption is that institutional inequalities which affect our whole life prospects are inevitable in any society. It is this assumption of class division which makes Rawls's theory a narrow, thin, conception of justice based on rights and 'fairness'. Principles of justice like Rawls's underpin class-division and do not go very deep in order to discover the nature of injustice. For in this society there will still be inequality, not only between individual incomes but between the life prospects of the different classes. He does not see that the class inequality in the market system is bound to be an inequality of power as well as income, that it allows one class to dominate another. Rawls's theory shows the close ideological connection between bourgeois 'freedom' -- the social contract -- and utility, between the procedural justice of the market and the utility confined to economic growth. Rawls's idea of freedom is the negative one -- the virtual absence of restrictions on the satisfaction of whatever desires an individual may have and, of course, the absence of restrictions on private property and accumulation of wealth.

Rawls's model of man is economic man, *homo economicus*. The market model of mankind prevails. The motivation for the social democratic safety net approach, as opposed to Nozick's liberal democratic approach, is not pity or love, only cautious self-interest. The person in the original position is hedging bets as to whether s/he will be a capitalist or a worker. Rawls's theory is not at all about general justice in the traditional sense which requires *philia* or friendship. Rawls justifies the market; and he does not

consider the Marxist critique which shows that the capitalist market is a system of domination, exploitation and slavery, and that political liberalism is its ideology. As Macpherson remarks, Rawls's theory of justice:

> does not recognise that in a competitive market system where capital and labour are in separate hands, all capital, whatever its degree of concentration, is power which controls and impedes the lives of others. Capital in that society is extractive power, and the extractive power of the owners of capital diminishes the developmental powers of the non-owners.[330]

5.4 Raz's 'Personal Autonomy' as an Answer to the Question of Perfectionism versus Anti-perfectionism.

Most contemporary liberalism rejects the perfectionism of the earlier liberal tradition's aspiration (e.g. J.S. Mill's) to 'make men moral' on the ground that perfectionism violates fundamental principles of 'justice' and 'human rights'.[331] They maintain that even if moral perfection is desirable, this is not a good enough reason for any particular version of it to be enacted in legislation. Hence as a matter of moral principle they rule out so called " 'morals' laws", in favour of anti-perfectionist theories of 'justice' and 'political morality'.

There are however contemporary liberal perfectionists such as Joseph Raz who join perfectionist critics such as Aristotle in arguing that anti-perfectionism's ideal of government neutrality about the human good is

illusory. Both traditional perfectionists and liberal perfectionists agree that governments *must* inevitably act on the basis of some conception of the human good. The dispute then is about which conception of the 'human good' they advocate and not, as anti-perfectionist mainstream contemporary liberalism believes, about a neutral view of the human good.

The political morality advanced by Raz in his book *The Morality of Freedom* is one that maintains the *value* of "personal autonomy". This he believes is an intrinsic human good for human beings (although not the only one), and is realised in choosing among or between *morally good* options. Raz's point is that if the autonomous person pursues certain ends which are evil or empty, then they are bereft of any value, so a government must not protect or be neutral about such pursuits. However he insists that the government must limit its use of legislation when pursuing a perfectionist concern for autonomy due to the 'harm principle' that excludes the criminalisation of what Raz calls 'harmless' or 'victimless' immoralities. Against the anti-perfectionist John Rawls, Raz argues that Rawls's own procedures for arriving at principles of justice (e.g. the original position, the veil of ignorance) do not exclude perfectionist conclusions.

As he says

> An agreement on a method of choosing between perfectionist principles cannot be ruled out on the grounds that the methods of evaluating different ideals are themselves subject to evaluative controversy. They are

> not more evaluative than some of the psychological facts available to the parties...and the considerations concerning self-respect on which the priority of liberty is based.[332]

Raz's criticism of Rawls is that the people in the original position are not neutral about values they choose; rather they are choosing between values. He writes

> An agreement on a method of choosing between perfectionist principles cannot be ruled out on the grounds that the methods of evaluating different ideals are themselves subject to evaluative controversy. They are not more evaluative than some of the psychological facts available to the parties...and the considerations concerning self-respect on which the priority of liberty is based.[333]

Raz maintains that the autonomy of the person in the original position, who is concerned for the dignity and integrity of individuals, does not require moral neutrality (being 'disinterested', as Rawls unfortunately calls it, in each other's interests); rather it requires moral pluralism in which individuals are free to choose. He is against the idea of autonomy without constraint; in fact he argues that autonomy is possible only within a framework of constraints.

For Raz then, there is no completely autonomous person. The idea of the existentialist with no biological or social nature, whose mind is a *tabula rasa* for his/her will, is absurd. Raz then like Socrates believes autonomy only has value when in pursuit of the good. They both are against the anti-perfectionism and moral relativism which says 'do what you like'-- any immoral action which is alleged to be autonomous is, for both Raz and Socrates, as it is for Kant, devoid of moral value. Raz summarises his position as follows

> Since autonomy is valuable only if it is directed at the good it supplies no reason to provide, nor any reason to protect, worthless let alone bad options. To be sure autonomy itself is blind to the quality of options chosen. A person is autonomous even if he chooses the bad...[but] autonomously choosing the bad makes one's life worse than a comparable non-autonomous life is. Since our concern for autonomy is a concern to enable people to have a good life it furnishes us with reason to secure that autonomy which could be valuable. Providing, preserving or protecting bad options does not enable one to enjoy valuable autonomy.[334]

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For Raz autonomy is itself an intrinsic good, and someone is still autonomous even if they choose the bad; but the *value* of personal autonomy, Raz argues, is conditional upon whether or not one uses one's autonomy for good or ill. However Robert George, a modern Thomist, challenges Raz. He believes that the significance of autonomy lies not in

providing a reason for action, but, rather, in supplying a condition for the possibility of action -- the choice as to whether one deliberates well and chooses uprightly or not. George concludes that it is a mistake to conceive of autonomy as itself an intrinsic good. Rather one would use one's autonomy for the sake of, and realising the good of, practical reasonableness's choice among or between other goods.

> Raz's perception that morally upright (i.e. practically reasonable) choices are intrinsically perfective of human beings, while immoral (i.e. practically unreasonable) choices realise no value in respect of the autonomy exercised in making them, is entirely sound. The intrinsic perfection is located in the exercise of reason that autonomy makes possible, however; it is not located in autonomy itself.[335]

George aims to overcome a difficulty in Raz's theory of autonomy highlighted by Donald Regan[336]. Regan believes there is an inconsistency in holding that autonomous actions can still be termed autonomous even when they are evil or wicked. Regan believes that Raz should deny this and instead use the term autonomy only to describe morally upright actions, as the only other alternative would be to deny autonomy any value at all. George believes that Regan is right in pointing out this inconsistency but he disagrees with the advice he gives in solving it.

George states that autonomy *appears* to be intrinsically valuable because there is something more perfect about the realisation of goods when they are

the result of one's own deliberation and choice. However for George that additional perfection is not provided by autonomy but by the exercise of reason in self-determination (practical reason). Practical reasonableness (Aristotle's virtue of *phronesis*), like other basic goods, is intrinsically valuable because it is capable of providing an ultimate reason for action. The same cannot be said for Raz's "personal autonomy" as this may be grounded in some non-rational factor; autonomy can lead to bad or wicked behaviour. So for George we must use our autonomy to choose what is practically reasonable between certain possibilities -- we do not choose certain possibilities because they are autonomous. Raz believes that while autonomy is intrinsically a good (i.e. better to have it than not to have it even if it results in bad action), the value of personal autonomy lies in its use for the good. George however believes that Regan is right in pointing out the inconsistency here; but rather than say, like Regan, that only good acts are truly autonomous, George believes that the real value does not lie in autonomy, it lies in practical reason's use of autonomy for the good.

Raz's concept of a liberal perfectionism aims at overcoming the relativism of the moral neutrality of Rawls's anti-perfectionism. He quite rightly points out that such moral neutrality is in fact illusory. However, his theory is itself open to criticism for failing to understand the cognitive nature of moral reasoning. George takes on board Regan's criticism and develops it towards an Aristotelian view of *phronetic* reasoning's use of the autonomous will and as such gives a fuller account than Raz. Raz, while providing a corrective to Rawls, does not seem to recognise that a model of rationality like, for instance that of Aquinas is required to instruct the autonomous will, so that ends and means of the human act can be reasoned about. Aquinas

details the complex cognitive processes involved in the voluntary human act and stresses the development and use of practical reasoning's judgement in line with virtue, in order to become an authentic human being. Etienne Gilson lays out Aquinas's position here,

> The intellectual virtue of prudence together with the three moral virtues of justice, temperance and courage are known as the principal or *cardinal* virtues. They imply both the faculty to act right and the actual accomplishing of the good act: to know what to do and how to do it. Virtuous living guided by practical reason becomes the internal principle which regulates our autonomous moral activity.[337]

Raz's concept of autonomy like Taylor's concept of 'strong evaluation' is un-anchored and inadequate in comparison to the Thomistic model of rationality. Without such a rational framework to guide the autonomous will's judgement of what value is, then it seems to me relativism about such matters is inevitable.

However some modern Thomists, Germain Grisez and followers such as John Finnis lack the Aristotelian dimension of Aquinas. Finnis for instance accepts that there are objective goods, yet like Hume and Kant he argues that these are not 'natural', rather they are a result of practical reasoning. He would contend for instance, that knowledge is objectively good, but this is something different from saying that it is the object of a natural inclination in the Thomistic sense. He accepts the positivist 'is/ought' dichotomy and

rules out the possibility of arguing from the natural to the good. For Finnis you cannot get from the facts of nature, which for him is Newtonian, not Aristotelian, to a normative claim about what ought to be. To say that dogs have four legs, for instance, does not license one to say that they ought to have four legs. Theoretical reasoning (science) tells us what is (understands nature) but it does not tell us what we should do. For Finnis this is the domain of practical reason, which intuits values; practical reasonableness judges the appropriate values in given circumstances.

Finnis does not follow Aristotle or Aquinas closely. For them nature is not a mechanism. Rather human nature is that of a developing organism with rational needs. Finnis does not seem to be able to account for the Thomistic statement already quoted that it is naturally knowable that the human intellect needs truth and the human will goodness. Finnis's theory is thus, like Rawls's, based on 'rational' rights set against nature rather than a natural law which aims at fulfilling our nature.

5.5 Charles Taylor and Authenticity.

Like Raz, Charles Taylor argues against John Rawls's neutrality regarding the good. He argues that many people, Muslims for example, would not be able to make any sense of the idea of the neutrality of a person in the 'original position', or of a corresponding 'procedural justice'; Rawls's sketch of 'justice' is designed for western 'enlightened' individuals. Rawls universalises a particular mode of being and denies the intrinsic validity or

worth of all other ways of being. In effect, he denies the value of difference by imposing an illusory value-free model on mankind. Rawls insists that if one chooses to be a Muslim one would only do so secondarily, after one has entered the social contract. There is surely no justice in Rawls's theory for Muslims or any body else who is different from the economic model of the human being that he postulates.

Taylor's philosophical psychology solves the problem of free will and determinism with a model of rationality based on 'strong evaluations'. He also attempts to use the rational capacity of humans to answer political and ethical problems about enlightenment universalism as one criterion of rationality, and recognition of difference, ethnicity, culture etc. as a counter criterion. The question is whether morality (and by extension politics) requires only recognising our common equality as rational beings; or whether it requires, for instance, positive discrimination in favour of groups or individuals who are not of the mainstream culture.

Taylor believes that in the political realm we have to recognise difference. This means for him recognising the equal value of different ways of being. But what grounds the equality of value? Mere difference itself, he says, cannot be the ground of equal value. A recognition of difference -- that is, of the equal value of different identities -- is not enough; we also need some standards of value by which the expression of the identities concerned can be judged. There must be some substantive agreement on value or else the formal principle of equality will be empty and a sham. For Taylor the substantive agreement comes from 'strong evaluations'. He writes

> strong evaluations involve discriminations of right and wrong, better or worse, higher or lower, which are not rendered valid by our own desires inclinations and choices, but rather stand independent of these and offer standards by which they can be judged. These standards constitute goods which the self requires to guide him/her to authentic living.[338]

For Taylor the concept of 'strong evaluation' is the answer to the problem of recognition of difference in the political realm. But he says it is not as adequate there as it is in philosophical psychology, where it is employed in order to argue for our free will. Strong evaluation is seen as a capacity to judge given desires, and to correct whims that might cloud our judgements. The aspiration to fullness or authenticity can be met by building something into one's life, some pattern of higher action which connects one's life with a greater reality.

For example Taylor says that when the young St. Francis left his friends and family he must have felt the insubstantiality of his previous life due to an aspiration to reach a higher being; he must have been looking for something fuller, more whole, so that he could give himself more to God, without stint. Similarly Taylor sees the revolutionary who sees him or herself as part of a social revolution which will emancipate and redeem the human race as giving meaning or fuller being to his/her life by practically applying every fibre of his/her being to achieving this task. But Taylor does not provide a unifying theory of the rational good; for instance, one based on human nature, as Aquinas (following Plato and Aristotle in the dialectical tradition)

does. Rather he seems content with such illustrative examples.

These two examples of "strong evaluation" favour a desire for authenticity, to fill a deep sense of loss or emptiness found within a current form of life. But Taylor does not seem to register that such evaluations can themselves be evaluated by a yet higher-order evaluation. One would need to judge the validity of for example Heidegger's call to the authenticity of being a true German and serving the Fuhrer. At what stage do we reach finality in a regression to higher orders? And more significantly perhaps, what are the criteria for any of these evaluations?

Taylor does not answer this problem. Which ideal/value contents are higher and therefore more fully human? What is truly good and just? What makes us truly free?[339] Taylor insists that the householder (family wo/man) who becomes neither a saint nor a revolutionary also 'evaluates strongly'. S/he may not fully rise to the joys of higher being, because s/he cannot give him/herself to these concerns unstintingly. However his/her ultimate allegiance would be to higher being, and against those who would say that s/he chose a pusillanimous second best s/he could say that s/he intended giving his/her life meaning through the rich joys of family love, through the concerns of providing and caring for spouse and children and by building up a web of relationships which gives fullness and joy to human life. This person like the previous two has set a direction for his/her life and as such has already enriched his/her life by building something into it.

Taylor leaves the problem there. This is a superficial interpretation of the problem and does not pay attention to actual choices which must be involved

in living such a life if one is truly aiming at the good (just) life with which Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas are concerned. For instance is it rational for the family person, who pickets at Harryville Catholic church in Ballymena, or "protests" with pipe bombs against four year old girls' going to Holy Cross school in Ardoyne, or wears the uniform of an oppressive regime or the sash of a sectarian supremacist 'religious order', to claim to be authentic or to be in touch with a higher and more meaningful form of life? Or indeed can a family person who idly stands by (in thought and deed) in obviously discriminatory or unjust circumstances or societies, or economic geo-political systems claim to be authentic because s/he can find sufficient meaning in family and friends, or in religious traditions? After all s/he could at least have done something about the injustice, local or global. Could it be the case that s/he would in fact be even more religious, rational and authentic by confronting the truth of the situation and putting this theory into practice?

These questions show that far more is needed to answer the problem of relativism than Taylor's unanchored concept of 'strong evaluation'. Rather human beings need some basis for systematic guidance. For instance in the dialectical tradition of philosophy, the above situation poses the question of what I should do when I encounter unjust societies (laws etc.) and wish still to be a good person. As we have seen, for Aquinas the natural rational moral law prescribes that an unjust law is not a law at all, it is rather an act of violence, and as such need not be obeyed. So within this framework the family person who, for any other reason than out of the virtue of prudence, acquiesces in an unjust society, transgresses the first precept of the natural law 'good is to be done and bad avoided'. Such a person has breached the principles of moral reasoning.

Also Taylor's notion of strong evaluations (i.e. second order evaluations) does not seem to indicate where this process stops. Can we not have strong evaluations about our strong evaluations? What further model of rationality, morality or justice allows us to make such a judgement? Taylor does not give us grounds for strong evaluations; in other words there is no objectivity. He therefore remains a relativist, under the spell of the modernist enlightenment to which he is inordinately sympathetic.

It seems to me that something like Aquinas's objective concept of human good, which is at the basis of his natural law position, is less problematic than Taylor's theory of strong evaluation. Aquinas offers us guidance to the full complexity of human existence. For instance for Aquinas I would simply be wrong if I strongly evaluate that my Aryan ideal requires that six million Jews should be killed. Also for Aquinas I would be wrong if I strongly evaluate that the Catholic religion is a barrier to human 'freedom' and 'progress' and is mere superstition and should be oppressed in the most savage way. This is the 'strong evaluation' made by the Orange Order in Ireland.

As indicated earlier, Taylor believes that 'strong evaluation' is necessary and helpful to judge the recognition of difference. This is similarly problematic. Taylor suggests that we should respond to the question whether to subsidise a black lesbian company putting on a theatrical tour, by saying that we should do so only if we strongly evaluate that it is 'good' theatre. But he does not give an account of 'the good'; it seems therefore to remain subjective and relative. A homophobic racist will not admit that his/her

strong evaluation is a "whim" that clouds his/her judgement. Strong evaluation is employed here oppressively as a device to discriminate.

But what is it that makes something worthy of respect? In the dialectical tradition what is good must be at the same time just and right and open to the continual scrutiny of reason, including scrutiny of the nature of reason itself. The point (and it is one which Taylor does not deal with) is that some 'cultures' such as the Ku Klux Klan's (or its British version – the Orange Order) do not deserve recognition or respect, since they are irrational and unjust.

5.6 Bhaskar: Realism Includes Acknowledging Relativity

Roy Bhaskar's realist theory of science offers a criticism and an alternative to the relativism implicit in scientism. At the beginning of *Reclaiming Reality* Bhaskar quotes Kant's *Sapere aude* (dare to be wise). This motto of the eighteenth-century bourgeois enlightenment can, Bhaskar argues, become the dawning of a new socialist enlightenment which will stand to some future order of things as "the bourgeois enlightenment stood to the American declaration of independence and the French revolution".[340]

Bhaskar aims to convince socialist intellectuals of the crucial significance of philosophy as the discipline that has traditionally underwritten both what constitutes science or knowledge proved by reason, and legitimate political, moral and economic practices. For in a capitalist economy and bourgeois society socialism will never be simple sense. For Bhaskar then the task or project socialist intellectuals should set themselves is to win the intellectual

high ground for socialism. This, he argues, can only be achieved if we take philosophy seriously. He defines his use of philosophy thus:

> philosophy is conceived in Lockean fashion, as an underlabourer for science and projects of human emancipation and, in Leibnizian mode, as an analyst and potential critic of conceptual systems and forms of social life in which they are embedded.[341]

There are a whole host of other philosophies which Bhaskar employs in the course of his underlabouring in philosophy, but he stays silent about them in this very basic definition of philosophy including the thought of Plato and Aristotle (which was continued and perfected by Aquinas), and the thought of Marx, who himself drank deep at the well of Greek philosophy and with the help of Schelling and Feuerbach among others had already claimed the intellectual high ground for socialists from the bourgeois apologists Kant and Hegel.

Bhaskar affirms that all philosophies presuppose a realism, that is they presuppose an ontology or general account of the world. This being so, the crucial question is, what kind of realism gives us the critical tools to apprehend reality? Is it, following the Cartesian dichotomy, an empirical and pragmatic, or an idealist realism on the one hand? Or a scientific, transcendental and critical realism on the other? Bhaskar is opposed to the former and affirms the latter. These distinctions help us to understand "New realism" as actually a realism of the most superficial sort; it is empirical (or empiricist) realism. It fails to recognise what Aristotle and Marx called the

essences or structures (what Bhaskar calls generative mechanisms -- which seem to correspond to Aristotelian and Thomistic essences) underlying and producing observable phenomena and events; whereas critical realism

> is not, nor does it license, either a set of substantive analyses or a set of practical policies. Rather it provides a set of perspectives on society (and nature) and on how to understand them. It is not a substitute for, but rather helps to guide, empirically controlled investigations into the structures generating social phenomena.[342]

Bhaskar continues

> And from this critical realist perspective we can see the swingometer of intellectual fashion as having lurched from the hyper-structuralist view of people as the mere effects or dupes of structures over which they have neither knowledge nor control to the 'new realist' view which effectively empties the social world of any enduring structural dimension.[343]

Against the poles of atomistic, voluntaristic individualistic liberalism (both utilitarian and Weberian) and the undifferentiated collectivism of Durkheimism and reification of labourism (Stalinism), critical realism seeks an understanding of the relationship between social structures and human agency that is based on a transformational conception of social activity which avoids voluntarism and reification. The social (structures) essentially

consist in or depend on relations (reproduced or changed by human agency). Bhaskar explains that

> Far from it being the case that, in Mrs Thatcher's dictum, society doesn't exist, the existence of society is a transcendentally necessary condition for any intentional act at all. It is the unmotivated condition for all our motivated productions. We don't create society – the error of voluntarism. But these structures which pre-exist us are only reproduced or transformed in our everyday activities; thus society does not exist independently of human agency – the error of reification. The social world is reproduced or transformed in daily life.[344]

He points out that social relations are themselves structures which pre-exist the individuals who enter into them. All social structures (e.g. the economy, the state, the family etc.) presuppose social relations; for instance the capitalist system presupposes the relations between capital and labour. For Bhaskar then, the focus of critical realism is to provide an explanatory key to the understanding of structures of social relations aimed at the self-emancipation of the exploited and oppressed. Critical realism asserts that the social world, being itself a social product, is seen as essentially subject to the possibility of change or transformation. Bhaskar (echoing Marx) illustrates this approach.

> Society then is the ensemble of positioned practices and networked interrelationships which individuals never

> create but in their practical activity always presuppose, and in so doing everywhere reproduce or transform.[345]

In order to transform society towards socialism we must know the underlying structures of the present society. The world cannot be rationally changed unless it is adequately interpreted. But Bhaskar cautions us on two points. Firstly we should use critical realism in an explanatory role and not a predictive one, because social systems are intrinsically open (incomplete), and this makes scientific predictions impossible. However, powerful explanatory theories like Marx's may make conditional predictions about tendencies in the future, but the failure of such predictions would not falsify the explanatory theory.

Secondly, we are reminded that social theory and social reality are interdependent. The social theory is practically conditioned by, and potentially has practical consequences in, society. However critical realism is opposed to the view that the social theorist 'constructs' reality (the epistemic fallacy – the reduction of being to knowing). Critical realism also opposes the view that social theory is value free or neutral or passive. Social theories consist in a practical intervention in social life which entails values and actions. Therefore if we accept Marx's critique of political economy, we must then pass immediately to a negative evaluation of those structures and also to a positive evaluation of action rationally directed to changing them. This critical realist method generates an understanding of is and demonstrates the falsity of the standard fact/value and theory/practice dichotomies.

The critical realist perspective is one of socialist emancipation based on the transformation of structures. It is opposed to the tradition in social democracy which merely aims at ameliorating the current state of affairs. For Bhaskar critical realism seeks to transform unneeded, unwanted and oppressive structures to needed, wanted and empowering ones. Echoing Marx again Bhaskar tells us, we must change society from a mere reproductive one to a transformative one i.e. we need to revolutionise both humans and society. Thus the relationship between social knowledge or theory and social practice takes the form of a dialectical emancipatory spiral (very similar to the dialectic of justice in Plato) in which better theories may make possible new forms of practice which in turn can lead to better theories and so on.

Bhaskar, repeating Marx, opposes the Cartesian dichotomy between mind and body, nature and society. Socialists must transform the relationship between nature and society from a Promethean expansion based on the notion of a dilution of infinite resources, to a social form oriented to human well-being which is environmentally sustainable. The other crude dichotomy between mind and body, or between basic, bodily or physical needs and higher, psychological, mental or spiritual needs is objected to because he believes the latter needs are not the object of a different or separate set of practices, but are intrinsic to the way basic needs are met. So the so-called basic need of housing can be met in either an inhuman or a human way. This need should be provided for in a human way which could generate respect, dignity and allow for self-development – thus unifying in the person bodily and spiritual needs.[346] The basic elements of Roy Bhaskar's transcendental dialectical critical realism are thus perhaps the best attempt to date to take up

the inheritance of the dialectical realist tradition from Plato and Aristotle through Thomas to Marx.

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[1] See endnote 6 below.
[2]T. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968), p.120.
[3] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan.* (Cambridge U.P., 1991), p. 38.
[4] See J.S. Mill, "Bentham" in *Utilitarianism, On Liberty, Essay on Bentham*, (ed) Mary Warnock, (London, Fontana Press, 1962) pp. 78 -125.
[5] See R. A. Markus, "The Dialectic of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*" in *Plato: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Vol. 2, edited by Gregory Vlastos, (London; Macmillan, 1972).
[6] As argued by Paul Ricoeur in *Secularisation and Moral Change*, (Oxford U.P. 1967).
[7] *Early Writings* p. 327.
[8] *Early Writings* p. 329.
[9] *Early Writings* p. 257.
[10] *Early Writings* p. 256.
[11] For an elucidation of the divorce between the economic and the political, see Lucio Colletti "Bernstein and the Marxism of the Second International" in *From Rousseau to Lenin,* (London, New Left Books, 1972); Derek Sayer, *The Violence of Abstraction* (Cambridge, Blackwell, 1987) *passim.*
[12] A.P. d'Entreves, *Natural Law. An Introduction*, (London, Hutchinson, 1970).
[13] H. Rommen, *The Natural Law*, (New York: B. Herder Book Co., 1947).
[14] *Early Writings* p.423.
[15] S.T. I-II, Q. 96, a.4, R.
[16] Engels, *Anti-Duehring.* (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977) pp. 170-172. Engels misses Marx's point about the asocial's being a fantasy, and he over-praises Rousseau for an alleged insight into the dialectical transformation of the good and rational into the bad irrational. This may have played a part in the Frankfurt School's mistaken diagnosis of a problem of a dialectic of reason in the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was never rational. The belief that it was, is the ideological Whig interpretation of history.
[17] *Theaetetus* 152a
[18] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1958). P. 226: "What has to be accepted, the given is – so to say – forms of life".
[19]For example B.L. Whorf, "Language, mind and reality" in Language *Thought and Reality*, pp.246-270.
[20] See Noam Chomsky "Some General Features of Language", in *Reflections on Language*, (London, Temple Smith, 1977), pp.78-134.
[21] *Theaetetus* 152a.
[22] See W.K.C Guthrie *The Sophists.*
[23] Cf. Kolakowski, *Positivism from Hume to the Vienna Circle, passim.*
[24] F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1973).
[25] J.L. Mackie *Ethics, Inventing Right and Wrong* pp. 10-11.
[26] J. L. Mackie *Ethics, Inventing Right and Wrong* p.38.
[27] For the views of Plato and Aristotle on Natural Law see T. Burns, "Aristotle and Natural Law", *History of Political Thought*, 19, 2 (1998), pages 142-66; M. B. Crowe, *The Changing Profile of Natural Law* (The Hague, 1977) pp. 17, 117-18; C. J. Friedrich, "Two Philosophical Interpretations Of Natural Law", *Diogenes*, 10 (1955), pages 98-112; G. P. Maguire, "Plato's Theory of Natural Law", *Yale Classical Studies*, X (1947), pages 151-78; M. Ostwald, "Plato on Law and Nature", in H. F. North (editor), *Interpretations of Plato,* (1977), pages 41-63; J. B. Morrall, Aristotle (London, 1977), pages 82-3; G. R.

Morrow, "Plato and the Law of Nature", in R.Konvitz and A. E. Murphy (editors), *Essays in Political Theory* (New York, 1948) pp 17 to 26; J. W. Salmond, "The Law of Nature" in *Law Quarterly Review*, XLII (1895), pages 126-7; M. Salomon Shellens, "Aristotle on Natural Law", *Natural Law Forum*, 72 (1959), pages 79-81; P. E. Sigmund, *Natural Law in Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass, 1971), pages to-3, 5-6, 8-9; J. Wild, *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law* (Chicago, 1953); F. D. Wormuth, "Aristotle on Law" in Konvitz and Murphy (editors), *Essays in Political Theory*, pages 45-61; B. Yack, "Natural Right and Aristotle's Understanding of Justice", *Political Theory* 18,2 (1990), pp 216-37.

[28] Plato states about this first healthy society "For though the society we have described seems to me to be the true one like a man in health, there is nothing to prevent us, if you wish, studying one in a fever", *Republic* (372 e), pp. 63-4 (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987). See Ernest Barker, "The *Republic* and its Theory of Communism" in *Greek Political Theory*, (London, Methuen, 1977).

[29] See Friedlander *Plato an Introduction* p.6.

[30] To explain this Plato has to bring in his own philosophical beliefs. The word "form" is now the common translation of the Greek *Eidos*.

[31] Cf. J. Daly *Marx: Justice and Dialectic* p.10: "The spirit of this dialectic is an orientation towards a unity of truth beauty and goodness, nature and reason, being and value, freedom and justice, through the Good, source of unity of the intelligible, in the absolute self-knowledge of Mind in which the finite human mind shares".

[32] See Iris Murdoch *Metaphysics as a guide to Morals* p.510: "Plato and the presocratics would not have made any sharp distinction between philosophy and religious reflection. Plato's work is full of images and myths at which we must work to see what they mean in terms of everyday morals".

[33] Cf. Meno and *Phaedo*.

[34] See Friedlander, *Plato an Introduction* p.30.

[35] See the *Symposium* 212a where Truth, the Good and absolute Beauty are equated, when Daytime shows Socrates what he will learn at the end of his ascent to beauty.

[36] *Republic* 521c.

[37] *Republic* 515d.

[38] *Republic* 517c.

[39] *Republic* 508e.

[40] *Republic* 518c.

[41] *Republic* 509b.

[42] See *Republic* 517c: "But in my opinion, for what it is worth, the final thing to be perceived in the intelligible region, only with difficulty is the Form of the Good; once seen, it is inferred to be responsible for whatever is right and valuable in anything, producing in the visible region light and the source of light, and being in the intelligible region itself controlling source of truth and intelligence".

[43] The Republic 490b.

[44] Cf. *Symposium* and *Phaedrus* for a fuller discussion on the importance of *eros*. Also see Iris Murdoch *Metaphysics as a guide to Morals* p.24: "Plato portrays *Eros* as an ambiguous spirit, a daemon not a god, child of poverty and Ingenuity, magician, alchemist, shabby, homeless, without shoes, dwelling between ignorance and wisdom, in love with beauty, aspiring to good, but potentially destructive. *Eros* is sexual energy as spiritual energy".

[45] See Friedlander *Plato an Introduction* p. 50: "Plato saw the power of the great demon extend to a new dimension: not only does the lover teach and the beloved learn; it is their love from which the deepest insight springs".

[46] E. Voegelin *Order and History* asserts that "the vision of *Agathon*, its understanding of death and immortality, supersedes with its new authority the older authority of myth. And the philosopher's authority, in its turn, will be superseded by the revelation of spiritual order through Christ". p.96

[47] Iris Murdoch comments in *Metaphysics as a guide to Morals* p. 402: "The gravity of sin compels us" [to rise from such a state].

[48] Cf. Pierre Hadot *Philosophy as a way of Life*. Also see Friedlander *Plato an Introduction* p.28 "For Plato injustice is disorder [whereas the cosmos is in harmony and order - so] ...The cosmos is the structure of the world as it is of the state and the soul".

[49] Cf. Friedlander *Plato an Introduction* p.18 " But his final purpose was not the discovery of a concept, just as he was never satisfied with any definition he ever reached. Behind every and any question raised there

was the final question: How should man live in the service of the city, which requires the virtuous man, and in the service of God, who requires the good man in a well ordered society".

[50] *Republic* 540a. Cf. *The Symposium* (211e): "How do you think then someone would react, then, to the sight of beauty itself, in its perfect, immaculate purity - not beauty tainted by human flesh and colouring and all that mortal rubbish, but absolute beauty, divine and constant? Do you think someone with his gaze fixed there has a miserable life?".

[51] *Republic* 517c.

[52] *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans T. M. Knox (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 166: "The State is the divine will, in the sense that it is mind present on earth, unfolding itself to be the actual shape and organisation of a world".

[53] See endnote 28 above.

[54] See James Daly, Deals *and Ideals: Two Concepts of Enlightenment*, pp. 73-74. I am in general greatly indebted to James Daly's work.

[55] *Republic* 534c.

[56] *Republic* 550a.

[57] Cf. Iris Murdoch *The Fire and The Sun* p.17: "Academic aesthetic theories are pernicious because they present art as some sort of complex lofty mystery. But there is no mystery. Purity, simplicity, truthfulness, and the absence of pretence or pretension are the marks of sound art, and such art is universally understood, as are simple folk tales and moral stories. Ordinary people know instinctively that art becomes degraded unless it is kept simple".

[58] Cf. S. Rosen *Plato's Symposium* p. 200: "The orderly and regular is beautiful because it endures the flux of genesis; it remains visible in the midst of decay and obscuration. It is the light by which we are able to see the decaying and the obscure".

[59] However H. G. Gadamer reminds us in *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* p. 116: "[That] it is still true that the good must be separated out of everything that appears good and seen in distinction from it. But it is in everything and is seen in distinction from everything only because it is in everything and shines forth from it".

[60] *Philebus* p.145.

[61] H. G. Gadamer *The Idea of the Good in Platonic-Aristotelian Philosophy* p.116.

[62] Cf. Iris Murdoch *The Fire and the Sun* p.53: "Beauty comes about through the persuasion of necessity by divine intelligence; everything that exists has both a necessary and a divine cause. Beauty belongs to God and must be sought only in him, as he makes it visible through the cosmos".

[63] I am indebted to J. Daly for an account of ontology; see "Interview with the Philosopher's Web" magazine p.1: "So, in a sense, ontology is all philosophy, unified as an ultimate understanding of being, especially of the relation of the actual and the ideal, of fact and value, 'is' and 'ought', what the Germans call '*Sein*' and '*Sollen*', what is and what ought to be. The relation of 'is' and 'ought' is also the relation of the empirical and the rational, of matter and mind, materialism and idealism, of finite and infinite, with the possibility of total incommensurability, of the 'wholly other' or transcendent".

[64] Iris Murdoch op. cit. p.206: "Praise is truly beautiful when it is so constructed as to make visible to an audience as much of the truth as it is able to perceive. The "whole" truth would then be beautiful only to him who can see it as it is. To the non-philosopher the whole truth would be ugly rather than beautiful".

[65] *Symposium* 210d.

[66] Ibid.

[67] See the *Symposium* 212a where, Truth the Good and absolute Beauty are equated when Diotima shows Socrates what he will learn at the end of his ascent to beauty.

[68] Cf. *Symposium* (211e): "How do you think then someone would react, then, to the sight of beauty itself, in its perfect, immaculate purity - not beauty tainted by human flesh and colouring and all that mortal rubbish, but absolute beauty, divine and constant? Do you think someone with his gaze fixed there has a miserable life?".

[69] Aristotle *Politics* iii. 5. 1280b 10

[70] Aristotle *Politics* iii. 5. 1280b.

[71] C. Berry in *Human Nature* p. 29 comments: "The dominant characteristic of Aristotle's philosophy is the analysis of the essential nature of things. This nature is discerned by discovering what the thing's function or purpose, its end (*telos*) is. According to Aristotle it is Man's essential nature to think or reason. The purpose of this reasoning, the purpose of Man's intellect, is to seek the truth".

[72] Aristotle, Politics, Book 1, Ch. 9.
[73] G. McCarthy in *Dialectics and Decadence*, p. 34, writes: "chrematistics...refers to various forms of acquisition, money making, and wealth creation, such as commerce or retail market trade (*kapelike*) and interest accumulation (*tokos*)."
[74] Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Ch. 9. (Penguin p.42).
[75] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Bk. V. 1133a31-b19, (Penguin, p.185).
[76] Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Ch. 9. (Penguin p.42).
[77] Aristotle, *Politics,* 1258a37-1258b3, p.51: "usury is most reasonably hated, because its gain comes from money itself and not from that for the sake of which money was invented [exchange]".
[78]Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Ch. 9. (Penguin p.41).
[79]Aristotle, *Politics*, Book 1, Ch. 10. (Penguin p.46).
[80] Cicero, *De Republica*, 1928a, p.211.
[81] S.T. 1a 2a Q. 94, a5, ad 3.
[82] G. McCarthy Marx and Classical Antiquity, p. 7.
[83] See A.P.d'Entreves *Natural Law* p.24. There are different sorts of laws. There is the law of the state, which expresses the interest of one particular community (*ius civile*). There is the law of nations (*ius gentium*), which men have devised for their mutual intercourse. But there is also a law which expresses a higher more permanent standard. It is the law of nature (*ius naturale*), which corresponds to that which is always good and equitable (*bonum et aequum*).
[84] S.T., 1a 2ae, Q. 91, arts. 1, 2.
[85] S.T. 1a 2ae, Q. 90, a. 2.
[86] S.T.1a 2ae Q. 90, a. 3, R. A. MacIntyre makes a very interesting argument that Aquinas has a liberal conception of law, not a theocratic one. See A. MacIntyre "Natural Law as Subversive: the case of Aquinas" in *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, (Duke U.P., Winter 1996).
[87] Aquinas S.T. 1a 2ae, Q. 91, 4.
[88] See Ralph McInerny's chapter 'Ethics' in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* p.209, where topically enough he states: "If a society passed a law making it obligatory to slaughter Irishmen, members of that society could not escape censure by appealing to the law. Some civil laws, we should say, do not oblige and, while they have the look of law, actually are a perversion of it".
[89] Aquinas S.T. 1a 2ae, Q.104, 6)
[90] See J. W. Burrow, Whigs and Liberals, (Oxford, Clarendon, 1988), p.1: "Lord Acton identified the first Whig as St. Thomas Aquinas".
[91] Aquinas, S.T. 1a 2ae Q 94, a4.
[92]See E. Gilson *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp.262-263 "Four intellectual virtues stand out as most important: understanding, knowledge, wisdom and prudence...Understanding, knowledge and wisdom are not distinguished by juxtaposition, but fall into hierarchical order.....Both knowledge and understanding depend upon wisdom, which contains and rules them, because it judges not only understanding and its principles, but also knowledge and its conclusions."
[93] See E. Gilson *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* pp.263.
[94] See H. Rommen *The Natural Law* p.45 "Here teleology - the doctrine of ends or final causes, enters the scene. The essences of things, which are exemplifications of the ideas conceived by the Divine intellect, constitute at the same time the end of goal of the things themselves. The perfection or fulfilment of the things is their essence. Oughtness not blind compulsion and necessity, characterises the way man obeys laws".
[95]J. Ferraro, "St. Thomas Aquinas and Modern Catholic Doctrine" in *Monthly Review* (June 1986), p. 18.
[96] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (Cambridge U.P., 1991), pt, 1 ch. 13, p. 89.
[97] Strauss, *Hobbes Studies* p.13 "Only the right of self preservation is unconditional or absolute. By nature there exists only a perfect right and no perfect duty".
[98] Rommen, op. cit. page 83. quotes Hobbes "The same selfishness and the dictates of right reason, that is, the consideration of one's greater advantage and of peace determine the individuals to enter by way of covenant into the *status civilis* and to give up as many of their rights to everything as may make peace possible".
[99] See endnote 2 above.
[100] A.E. Taylor "The Ethical Doctrine of Hobbes" originally published in *Philosophy*, October 1938, and reprinted in *Hobbes Studies* (Oxford Bail Blackwell, 1965).

[101] H. Warrender *The Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, (Oxford U.P. 1957).
[102] G. McCarthy *Marx and the Ancients*, p.60.
[103] See endnote above.
[104]Strauss, *Hobbes Studies* p. 19.
[105] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (Penguin) p. 190.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid p.29.
[108]T. Hobbes, Leviathan, (Cambridge U.P. 1991), p.110.
[109] H. Rommen *The Natural Law* p. 86: "the older idea of natural law as an ethical system with material content loses all its functions: namely, to serve as a moral basis for positive law; to give men a standard and critical norm for the justice of positive law; to represent the eternal idea for which the historical state, as lawgiver and protector of justice, ought to strive".
[110] A. P. d'Entreves *Natural Law* p. 61.
[111] T. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (Cambridge U.P., 1991), pt, 1, ch. 14, p. 91.
[112] Rommen *The Natural Law* p. 88, "John Locke was as individualist in his social philosophy as was Hobbes, though he rejected Hobbes' glorification of the state as the 'Mortall God' and denied that the Leviathan is the exclusive source of law".
[113] Cf. K.C. Brown, *Hobbes Studies* p.12, "The predominant tradition had defined natural law with a view to the end or perfection of man as a rational and social animal".
[114] L. Strauss, "The Spirit of Hobbes's Political Philosophy" in *Hobbes Studies* p. 15.
[115] Ibid.
[116] L. Strauss, *Hobbes Studies* p.14, "The tradition which Hobbes opposed had assumed that man cannot reach the perfection of his nature except in and through civil society and, therefore that civil society is prior to the individual. It was this assumption which led to the view that primary moral fact is duty and not rights".
[117] d'Entreves p.42 "St Thomas's theory of natural law is laid down as an interpretation of man's nature and of his relation to God and to the universe. Natural law is unintelligible unless we realise its close link with the eternal divine order on which the whole creation ultimately rests".
[118] Cf. Plato, *Gorgias*.
[119] Hobbes, *Leviathan* p. 81
[120] Cf. J Daly 'Marx, Justice and Dialectic' in *Irish Philosophical Journal* 1987,p.84 "Hobbes's possessive reductionist account is: Desire and love are the same thing; save that by desire we always signify the absence of the object; by love most commonly the presence of the same".
[121]Strauss, Hobbes *Studies* p.17
[122] d'Entreves op. cit. p. 100.
[123]Ibid. p. 93 "Natural law is the outcome of man's quest for an absolute standard of justice. It is based upon a particular conception of the relationship between the ideal and the real...between what is and what ought to be".
[124] C. B Macpherson in "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man", *Hobbes Studies* p. 174, comments, "The anarchy of the market, which tends to be the form... of all social relations in capitalist society, is only possible, as the classical economists from Adam Smith to Marx pointed out, if there is an authority, the State, to maintain the bourgeois freedoms (contract, labour, exchange, and accumulation) against the demands of those who are dispossessed and against other national societies. This was explicitly Hobbes's doctrine".
[125] See d'Entreves p. 20
[126]Rommen op. cit. p. 59, asserts: "For Ockham the natural law is positive law, divine will. An action is not good because of its suitableness to the essential nature of man, wherein God's archetypal idea of man is represented according to being and oughtness, but because God so wills".
[127]Ibid. p.86. Rommen continues "the older idea of natural law as an ethical system with material content loses all its functions: namely, to serve as a moral basis for positive law; to give men a standard and critical norm for the justice of positive law; to represent the eternal idea for which the historical state, as lawgiver and protector of justice, ought to strive".
[128]C. B. Macpherson *Hobbes Studies* p. 183.
[129]d'Entreves p. 14
[130]C. B. Macpherson, "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man" in *Democratic Theory* p. 239

[131]Hobbes *Leviathan* p.151. This formulation was utilised by Marx in the development of his theory of labour power.
[132]C. B. Macpherson "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man" in *Democratic Theory* p. 239.
[133]Cf. J. W. N. Watkins, Hobbes's *System of Ideas*, p.84. "Hobbes wanted to reduce morality to rational self-interest. It comes after a complaint to the effect that what had hitherto been written concerning justice and policy was full of controversies and dispute; and he obviously felt that this would continue until the 'moral' law, the law that tells us how to live with others - is securely anchored in our deepest wants".
[134]A. MacIntyre *A Short History of Ethics* p. 135.
[135] Ibid. "Thus Hobbes tries to exhibit his own behaviour as consistent with his theory of motives, namely that human desires are such that they are all self-interested...According to Hobbes any regard for the welfare of others is secondary to a regard for, and indeed is only a means to, my own welfare".
[136]C. B Macpherson in "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man" in *Hobbes Studies* p.179, states that with Hobbes, "The relation of material objects to each other could be stated in laws of mechanical force just as the relations of individuals could be seen as the relations of units reduced to equality by the market".
[137]Watkins, *Hobbes's System of Ideas* p. 83.
[138]C.f. C. B Macpherson in "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man" in *Hobbes Studies* p.175 "There is much evidence that Hobbes's morality is the morality of the bourgeois world and that his state is the bourgeois state. There is his attitude towards the poor, his view on thrift and extravagance, his insistence that the state should institute private property and provide freedom for individual enrichment"
[139] See D. McLellan, *Karl Marx Selected Writings*, p. 143.
[140] Marx "On the Jewish Question" in *Early Writings*, p.234.
[141] Kant *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, (Cambridge U.P. 1998), p.56.
[142] Ibid. pp.8-9.
[143]A. P. d'Entreves *Natural Law* p. 86.
[144]Cf. Ibid. p. 90. d'Entreves remarks that Aquinas does not share, "our modern...notion of the sacred rights of the individual conscience".
[145] See L. Kolakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Vol.1, pp.416-20. Cf.Vol. 3, pp. 1-25.
[146] *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* trans. T.M. Knox, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1952), pp.75-110.
[147] Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge U.P., 1991), p. 20.
[148] See Werner Marx *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* p. 48 quoting Hegel " everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as substance, but as subject as well."
[149] See M. H. Abrams *Natural Supernaturalism* p. 229 "But this way, he also indicates, is equivalent to the Christian journey of the spirit through suffering in quest of redemption and rebirth". See also Adorno Negative *Dialectics* p. xiii "The priority of method is intimately linked with the idea of subject - epistemological method, logical foundation, and the grounding of knowledge and truth in the subject are part of a single historical project".
[150]*The Philosophy of Right* Preface (Cambridge U.P., 1991) p. 23.
[151] *The Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge U.P., 1991) p. 20.
[152] Hegel may be said to be in the tradition of Fichte which is concerned with the return of the I to the I (as opposed to Feuerbach's I -Thou relation and Bentham's I-It). This is the general theme of German Idealism which aims at the closure of philosophy by a self-conscious emanation, or alienation, and return in subjective consciousness. Stirner, with his 'Unique One', claimed to have gone beyond Hegel in his idealism. Sartre could be said to have gone beyond Stirner.
[153]L. Colletti Introduction to *Early Writings* p. 33.
[154] *Early Writings* p. 387.
[155] *Early Writings* p.98.
[156] *Early Writings* p.22.
[157]Marx, *Early Writings* p.292: "This economic constitution condemns men to such abject employments, such desolate and bitter degradation, that by comparison savagery appears like a royal condition".
[158] Early Writings p.87.
[159]L. Colletti Introduction to *Early Writings* p. 33.
[160] See Colletti op. cit. p.232: "Marx does not only want to see the end of the Hegelian philosophy of the state: he wants to see the actual dissolution of the state".
[161] See L. Kolakowski op. cit p.129" "A German revolution would mean the realisation of German philosophy by its own abolition. But philosophy can only be realised in the sphere of material action".

[162] *Early Writings* p.256.
[163] Marx continues: "...since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer removable, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative need – the practical expression of necessity – is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity, it follows that the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish all the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation...It is not a question of what this or that proletarian or even the whole proletariat, at the moment regards as its aim. It is a question of what the proletariat is, and what, in accordance with its being, it will historically be compelled to do. Its aim and historical action is visibly and irrevocably foreshadowed in its own life situation as well as in the whole organisation of society". *Karl Marx Selected Writings*, p. 135 ed. D. McLellan (London, Oxford U.P. 1977).
[164]*Selected Works*, (Moscow, 1962) vol.1, p. 44, 46, 51.
[165] *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 62, writes: "The disdain of Bauer and his disciples for the masses and their tendency to avoid complicity with the proletariat were motivated by a fear lest the general vision of liberty be replaced by advocacy of a particular class and espousal of its cause. For Marx, however, the proletariat was never a particular class, but the repository of the Hegelian 'universal class'."
[166] Marx and Engles, *Werke,* vol. xvi, p. 415.
[167] Marx writes in "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 285-6: " the inevitable consequence for the worker is overwork and early death, reduction to a machine, enslavement to capital which piles up in threatening opposition to him, fresh competition and starvation or beggary for a section of the workers."
[168] Cf. *Capital* I, p. 245: "vampire thirst for the living blood of labour".
[169] Cf. *Capital* I, p. 151: "boundless greed for riches".
[170] *Capital* vol. 1, p.252.
[171] *Early Writings* p.329: "Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard; hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty".
[172]*Selected Works*, (Moscow, 1962) vol.1, p. 53.
[173]Cf. J. Daly *Marx Justice and Dialectic* p. 21: "because it is *nothing* but *human need;* because it is propertyless, which means without the class need stemming from ownership of means of production to dominate or exploit any other class".
[174]*Early Writings*, (ed) T. Bottomore (London 1963) p. 55-56.
[175]*The German Ideology,* (London, 1965) pp.61-62. "For each new class which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aims, to represent its interests as the common interest of all the members of society, that is, expressed in ideal form: it has to give its ideas the form of universality...The class making the revolution appears from the very start...not as a class but as the representative of the whole society".
[176] Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, pp. 389-90. "Man is directly a natural being. As a natural being and as a living being he is on the one hand equipped with natural powers, with vital powers, he is an active natural being; these powers exist in him as dispositions and capacities, as drives. On the other hand, as a natural, corporeal, sensuous, objective being he is a suffering, conditioned and limited being, like animals and plants. That is to say, the objects of his drives exist outside him as objects independent of him; but these objects are objects of his need, essential objects, indispensable to the exercise and confirmation of his essential powers".
[177] Cf. *Early Writings* p. 391.
[178]Engels, *Anti-Duehring*. (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1977) p. 118.
[179] *Capital*, vol.1. p.283; and cf. *The Poverty of Philosophy*: "history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature". CW, vol. 6, p. 192.
[180]Marx, *Capital* I, p.177.
[181]Marx, *Early Writings* p. 389.
[182]According to G. Brenkert, Marx's *Ethics of Freedom*, p. 96, by 'fully developed' Marx meant: "the greatest development or realisation of one's desires, capacities and talents which was compatible, or

harmonious, with certain limits set by ones own determination of the hierarchy of one's needs and interests".

[183]See the 1857 Introduction to the *Grundrisse*.

[184]Scott Meikle in his article "Aristotle and Money" p. 39 comments that: "Marx's strategic dispositions in laying out the relation between economics and life are obviously very close to Aristotle's, and the reason for this is that Marx got them from Aristotle".

[185] *Early Writings* p. 378-79.

[186]*Early Writings*, p. 326: "Hence the worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working he does not feel himself. He is at home when he is not working, and not at home when he is working. His labour is therefore not voluntary but forced, it is forced labour".

[187]Cf. "Excerpts from James Mill's Elements of Political Economy" in the *Early Writings* p. 277-78: "Let us suppose that we had produced as human beings. In that event each of us would have *doubly affirmed* himself and his neighbour. (1) In my *production* I would have: objectified the *specific character* of my *individuality* and for that reason I would both have enjoyed the *expression* of my own individual *life* during my activity and also, in contemplating the object, I would experience an individual pleasure, I would experience my personality as an *objective sensuously perceptible* power *beyond all shadow of doubt*. (2) In your use or enjoyment of my product I would have the *immediate* satisfaction and knowledge that in my labour I had gratified a *human* need, i.e. that I had objectified *human nature* and hence had procured an object corresponding to the needs of another *human being*. (3) I would have acted for you as the *mediator* between you and the species, thus I would be acknowledged by you as the complement of your own being, as an essential part of yourself. I would thus know myself to be confirmed both in your thoughts and in your love. (4) In my individual expression of my own life I would have brought about the immediate expression of your life, and so in my individual activity I would have directly *confirmed* and *realised* my authentic nature, my *human communal* nature. Our productions would be as many mirrors from which our natures would shine forth".

[188]*Totality and Infinity* p.75

[189] *Early Writings* p. 264.

[190] Norman Geras, *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend*, (London, Verso, 1983) p.92.

[191] See endnote 14 above.

[192]See T. Shanin Late Marx and the Russian Road: Marx and 'the Peripheries of Capitalism' (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983); see also James White, *Karl Marx the Intellectual Origins of Dialectical Materialism*, (London, Macmillan, 1996).

[193] *Marx and Engels on the Irish Question*, p.432.

[194] Marx and Engels, *Ireland and the Irish Question*, p.402.

[195] See endnote 9 above.

[196] *Early Writings,* p. 348.

[197] See D. McLellan, *Karl Marx Selected Writings*, p.390.

[198] Ibid.

[199] Ibid. p.202.

[200] This is the theme of G.A. Cohen's Karl *Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, (Oxford U.P. 1978).

[201] Marx-Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26 (London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974), pp.365-6.

[202] *Selected Correspondence* pp.378-9.

[203] *Early Writings* p.348

[204] See T. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

[205] *Early Writings* p. 244.

[206] Cf. Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History*, p .92: "Nature is older than any tradition; hence it is more venerable than any tradition. The view that natural things have a higher dignity than things produced by men is based not on any surreptitious or unconscious borrowings from myth, or on residues of myth, but on the discovery of nature itself".

[207] *Early Writings*, p. 328.

[208] *Early Writings*, p.131.

[209] Quoted in R. Pippin, *Modernity as a Philosophical Problem*, (Oxford, Blackwell, 1992), p.148.

[210] *Capital* vol. 1, p. 253.

[211] *Capital* vol.1, pp.151-52.

[212] Cf. Michael DeGolyer "The Greek Accent of the Marxian Matrix" in *Marx and Aristotle* (ed.) G McCarthy, p. 115: "Long before his years of financial deprivation and intellectual toil in the British Museum – the years that have garnered most of the scholarly attention on Marx's education in the intricacies of the history and methodology of political economics – he had developed an intimate acquaintance with the languages and sources of the Western philosophical and political tradition. At the age of 17, Marx received a Gymnasium graduation certificate that noted his efforts in ancient languages (Latin and Greek), German, and history showed a very satisfactory diligence. He kept his early interests, habitually reading in Roman and Greek works of history, philosophy and literature...While his wide, appreciative reading of the ancients accounts for the many classical allusions permeating his work, his respect for Aristotle stands out."

[213] C.f. Michael DeGolyer "The Greek Accent of the Marxian Matrix" in *Marx and Aristotle* (ed.) G McCarthy, p. 119.

[214]See G McCarthy (ed.) Marx *and Aristotle* pp. 5-6.

[215]Two references to the *Nicomachean Ethics* and six to the *Politics*.

[216]*Capital* vol.1, P.532.

[217] G. McCarthy in *Dialectics and Decadence*, p. 9, also comments that the: "eight references to Aristotle in the *German Ideology* are, for the most part, passing scholarly references rather than the bases for substantive analyses."

[218] Michael DeGolyer "The Greek Accent of the Marxian Matrix" in *Marx and Aristotle* (ed.) G McCarthy, p. 116. Cf. Also John Pike, *From Aristotle to Marx*, (Ashgate, 1999).

[219] *The German Ideology*, MECW, vol.5, (New York, International Publishers, 1976), p.48.

[220]W. J. Booth "Households, Markets and Firms" in *Marx and Aristotle*, (ed) G. McCarthy, p. 249.

[221] *Capital* vol.1, p. 253.

[222] G. McCarthy in *Marx and the Ancients*, p.63, writes: "The contemporary Anglo-American tradition when dealing with morality and political theory has focused on theories of justice that emphasise the distribution of the wealth of society, and has lost this broader understanding of the nature of justice and human potential."

[223] G. McCarthy in *Dialectics and Decadence,* (London, Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), p.11, writes that; "The second chapter [*Capital*, vol.1] dealing with Marx's theory of value and commodity exchange, and his critique of bourgeois and socialist theories of justice, begins by mentioning Aristotle's distinction between use-value and exchange-value from the *Politics*.

[224] R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* pp. 35-36: "The mediaeval theorist condemned as a sin precisely that effort to achieve a continuous and unlimited increase in material wealth which modern societies applaud as meritorious...The true descendant of the doctrines of Aquinas is the labour theory of value. The last of the schoolmen was Karl Marx."

[225] G. McCarthy in *Dialectics and Decadence,* (London, Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), p. 11-12.

[226] G. McCarthy in *Dialectics and Decadence*, p. 12.

[227] *Capital* vol.1, p.150.

[228] Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 306.

[229] Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 323-4.

[230] *Capital,* vol. 1. p.729-30.

[231] K. Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit*, p.50-51.

[232] *Capital* 1 p. 728.

[233] Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit*, (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952), p. 60.

[234]For Hegel the Absolute Idea realises itself in a process of self-enrichment. Here, alienation is seen as a necessary phase of the Absolute attaining self-consciousness; it comes to fulfilment only through history and successive phases of alienation.

[235]Cf. Leszek Kolakowski *Main Currents of Marxism* vol. 1 p.116: "To Feuerbach alienation is purely evil and erroneous and possesses no positive value".

[236]See P. Masterson Atheism and Alienation p.72: "The fundamental weakness of Hegel's philosophical approach is that he sought to eliminate human alienation and achieve a reconciliation of man and God through a theory, which on reflection can be seen to be biased in favour of God at the expense of man".

[237]Cf. D McLellan The Thought of Karl Marx p.27: "Marx began by paying tribute to the achievements of Feuerbach, particularly in having shown that Hegel's philosophy was no more than a rationalised theology,

and having discovered the true materialist approach by starting from the social relationship of man to man" (the I - Thou relationship or humanism).

[238]See *Early Writings* p.349: "Communism begins with atheism (Owen), but atheism is initially far from being communism, and is for the most part an abstraction. The Philanthropy of atheism is therefore at first nothing more than an abstract philosophical philanthropy, while that of communism is at once real and directly bent towards action".

[239] *Early Writings* p. 244

[240]See D McLellan op. cit p.20: "The communal, social aspect of his [man's] nature only existed, in an unreal form, at the level of constitutions and talk of citizenship, whereas in his real everyday life he was an isolated individual involved in the economic war of all against all".

[241] *Early Writings* p. 245

[242]See *Early Writings* p.292 where Marx comments on the conditions of the workers under capitalism: "The evil that millions are only able to eke out a living through exhausting, physically destructive and morally and intellectually crippling labour; that they are even forced to regard the misfortune of finding such work as fortunate".

[243] Cf. *Early Writings* p. 391: "But man is not only a natural being; he is a *human* natural being; i.e. he is a being for himself and hence a *species* being, as which he must confirm and realise himself both in his being and in his knowing".

[244] *Early Writings* p. 369.

[245]*Early Writings* p.328: "To say that man's physical and mental life is linked to nature simply means that nature is linked to itself, for man is a part of nature".

[246]*Early Writings* p.329: "Animals produce only according to the standards and needs of the species to which they belong, while man is capable of producing according to the standards of every species and of applying to each object its inherent standard; hence man also produces in accordance with the laws of beauty".

[247]*Capital* p. 398.

[248] *Early Writings* p.326.

[249] *Capital* vol. 1 p.166: "One thing however is clear - Nature does not produce on one side owners of money or commodities, and on the other men possessing nothing but their own labour power".

[250]Richard Schacht *Alienation* p. 89.

[251] Richard Schacht in *Alienation* comments that for Marx p. 87: "the product such as another man requires of me will serve his interests, at my expense. In return for the means of mere subsistence, I produce the product he desires, at the cost of my own realisation, and often even at the cost of my physical well-being. Once it is finished, it is his to do with as he pleases, regardless of how that might affect me. It becomes an instrument of his will, and he becomes all the more powerful in relation to me by possessing it. My product thus contributes to my own oppression. In these circumstances, Marx suggests, my product is a force "hostile" to me as well as unrelated to my personality".

[252] *Capital* vol. 1. p. 508

[253] "On the Jewish Question" in *Early Writings*, p.229.

[254] . K. Marx, selection from *The Holy Family* in *Karl Marx Selected Writings* ed. D. McLellan, p. 148

[255] K. Marx *A Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy* p. 189.

[256] *Early Writings*, p.423.

[257] "Essence and Appearance: Aspects of Fetishism in Marx's Capital" in *New Left Review*, 65, 1971,

[258] *Capital* 1 p. 316.

[259] *Capital*, 1, p. 138

[260] *Capital*, 1, P.139

[261] *Capital* vol.3, p.353

[262] *Capital* vol. 3, p.359; also p.371.

[263] A. Wood "Marxian Critique of Justice", p.3: "When we look in the writings of Marx and Engels for a detailed account of the injustices of capitalism, however, we discover at once that not only is there no attempt at all in their writings to provide an argument that capitalism is unjust, but there is not even the explicit claim that capitalism is unjust or inequitable, or that it violates anyone's rights."

[264]A. Wood, *Karl Marx* p.43.

[265] *Early Writings* p.362.

[266]Husami, op. cit. p.50.

[267]Cf. Scott Meikle *Essentialism in the Thought of Karl Marx* p.66. Meikle quotes the following passage from Wood's *Karl Marx* p.202, and states that "Allen Wood puts it well": "An organic whole is essentially made up of different...reciprocally negating processes, which constitute the thing...the conflicting elements are not incompatible in the sense that they cannot co-exist for a time in the thing. But they are incompatible in the sense that the opposition between them destroys it, along with the contradictions which constitute it. The...opposite elements in an organic whole are reciprocally dependent and cannot exist without one another."
[268]N. Geras, "The Controversy About Marx and Justice" In New Left Review vol.? p. 56.
[269]"Marx on Distributive Justice" p.67.
[270] *Marx's Theory of Alienation* p.162.
[271]Cf. C. B. MacPherson's comments in "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man" p.170: "... it can be seen that Hobbes's analysis of human nature, from which his whole political theory is derived, is really an analysis of bourgeois man, that the assumptions, explicit and implicit, upon which his psychological conclusions depend are assumptions peculiarly valid for bourgeois society".
[272]*Capital* vol. 1 p. 194.
[273]Marx, Poverty of Philosophy p. 75.
[274]K. Marx *Capital* pp.729-30.
[275]Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 293.
[276]Husami, op. cit. p.45.
[277]J. Daly in *Marx Justice and Dialectic*, p. 92, comments: "so for Marx, justice is not a Kantian law, an abstract universal, the materialist definition of total justice is co - operative production by, and for the needs of the concrete universal, the proletariat as a community, the totality of existing humanity".
[278]Husami, op. cit. pp. 77-78.
[279]Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 287: " The political economist tells us that everything is bought with labour and that the capitalist is nothing but accumulated labour, but then goes on to say that the worker, far from being in a position to buy everything, must sell himself and his humanity."
[280] *Capital* vol. 3 p. 776.
[281] *Early Writings*, pp. 349-50.
[282] *Early Writings,* p.256.
[283] Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 290: "for the rights of the wealthy to subject the poor to boundless exploitation are still universally acknowledged."
[284]Marx "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts" in *Early Writings*, p. 292.
[285] *Grundrisse*, p.650.
[286] Cf. *Capital* I p. 285: "The contract by which he sold to the capitalist his labour-power proved, so to say, in black and white that he disposed of himself freely. The bargain concluded, it is discovered that he was no 'free agent', that the time for which he is free to sell his labour-power is the time for which he is forced to sell it".
[287] See G.Brenkert, *Marx's Ethics of Freedom*, p.104: "Freedom is the cardinal virtue of Marx's ethics. It is not simply a power or an ability to do certain things, nor is it a principle of action or a set of rights. Rather, Marx's treatment of freedom is best understood as the characterisation of a kind of life, a way of being, which we morally ought to realise. He urges us to Be free".
[288] *Capital*, vol. 3, in *Selected Writings*, ed. David McLellan, pp. 496-7.
[289]Cf. R.B.Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem,* p. 62: "These individualist notions of freedom are often viewed as a response to a collapse in the authority of the classical or pre-modern view of freedom as the true realisation of one's identity or nature. Such a view did not require a search within for an individual nature of self; rather just the opposite. Realising one's true nature, and so being fully free, instead required finding one's place or role in something outside oneself, first in the polis or social community, and ultimately in nature or the whole. By understanding that one could only be oneself by realising this function within the whole, one could achieve a satisfying and finally free life".
[290]I. Berlin *Four Essays on Liberty* p. 122, 123.
[291]See K. Marx, *Early Writings*, p.234: "Political emancipation is the reduction of man on the one hand to the member of civil society, the egoistic, independent individual, and on the other to the citizen, the moral person".
[292]Marx, *Early Writings*, p. 229.

[293]I. Berlin *Four Essays on Liberty* p. 131.
[294]K. Marx *Selected Writings* p. 338.
[295] Berlin, p.166.
[296] *Communist Manifesto*, p.54.
[297]C. B. Macpherson *Democratic Theory* p. 108-109.
[298]C.B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, p. 104.
[299]Cf. K.Marx, *Early Writings*, p. 239: "The view of nature which has grown up under the regime of private property and of money is an actual contempt for and practical degradation of nature...In this sense Thomas Munzer declares it intolerable that 'all creatures have been made into private property, the fish in the water, the birds in the air, the plants on the earth - all living things must become free' ".
[300] Macpherson, p.118.
[301] M.E.C.W. 5, p.132.
[302] M.E.C.W, 4, p.197.
[303]Marx, *Early Writings*, p. 230.
[304] See D. McLellan op. cit. p. 566.
[305]In M.E.C.W. 3: p. 296 Marx suggests that for a real community to exist, is for the relations of its members to be such that for each person 'the other person as a person has become for him a need'.
[306] Marx, *Early Writings*, p. 150.
[307] S. Kierkegaard, *Stages on Life's Way*, (Princeton U.P. 1940).
[308] F. Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals,* (New York, Vintage Books, 1973.). See endnote 5 above.
[309] J. P. Sartre *Being and Nothingness*, (London, Methuen, 1969), p.626.
[310] J. P. Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* pp.59-60.
[311] J. P. Sartre *Existentialism is a Humanism* p.55-56.
[312] J. P. Sartre *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, (New Jersey, Humanities Press, 1976).
[313] *A Theory of Justice* page 14.
[314] For a discussion of Rawls's attitude to relativism and universality see R.P. Wolff, *Understanding Rawls: A Reconstruction and Critique of A Theory of Justice*, (Princeton U.P. 1977).
[315] This is the view put forward by Glaucon in Plato's *Republic.* He assumes that all would abandon justice if given immunity (that is the point of the story of Gyges's Ring *Republic* p. 105) and maintains that it would be perfectly reasonable to act unjustly if you could deceive others into believing you are good.
[316]C. B. MacPherson, comments in "Hobbes's Bourgeois Man", in K. Browns *Hobbes Studies*, p.170: "... it can be seen that Hobbes's analysis of human nature, from which his whole political theory is derived, is really an analysis of bourgeois man, that the assumptions, explicit and implicit, upon which his psychological conclusions depend are assumptions peculiarly valid for bourgeois society".
[317] Cf. A MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 250: "for both Nozick and Rawls a society is composed of individuals, each with his or her own interest, who then have to come together and formulate common rules of life".
[318] J. Rawls *A Theory of Justice*, p. 14: "One feature of justice as fairness is to think of the parties in the initial situation as rational and mutually disinterested...not taking an interest in one another's interest".
[319]J. Rawls *A Theory of Justice*, p.vii: "During much of modern moral philosophy the predominant systematic theory has been some form of utilitarianism...We sometimes forget that the great utilitarians, Hume and Adam Smith, Bentham and Mill, were social theorists and economists of the first rank; and the moral doctrine they worked out was framed to meet the needs of their interests and fit into a comprehensive scheme".
[320] See endnote 313 above.
[321] *A Theory of Justice* p. 303.
[322]Ibid.
[323]J. Rawls 'Justice as Fairness', p. 133.
[324]This should be contrasted with the Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Thomistic idea of justice which is contained in the original idea of natural law. Here we can conceive of a movement of the human mind towards an eternal and immutable justice. This justice is conceived as being the higher or ultimate law, proceeding from the nature of the universe, from the Being of God and the reason of man.
[325]J. Rawls 'Distributive Justice', p. 62.
[326]J. Rawls 'Distributive Justice', p.69.
[327]Ibid., p.vii: "During much of modern moral philosophy the predominant systematic theory has been some form of utilitarianism...We sometimes forget that the great utilitarians, Hume and Adam Smith, Bentham

and Mill, were social theorists and economists of the first rank; and the moral doctrine they worked out was framed to meet the needs of their interests and fit into a comprehensive scheme".

[328]J. Rawls *A Theory of Justice*, p. 14: "One feature of justice as fairness is to think of the parties in the initial situation as rational and mutually disinterested...not taking an interest in one another's interest".

[329] C. B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, p.92.

[330] C. B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory*, p.92.

[331] See R.P. George *Making Men Moral* (Oxford U.P., 1996), p.4.

[332] J. Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* p. 126-7.

[333] Ibid.

[334] J. Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* p. 411-12.

[335] R. George, *Making Men Moral* p. 178.

[336] Donald Regan, 'Authority and Value: Reflections on Raz's *The Morality of Freedom', Southern California Law Review*, 62 (1989), 995-1085, at 1084.

[337] *The Christian Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* p.261

[338]C. Taylor, *Sources of the Self* p.4.

[339] Cf. C. Taylor *Sources of the Self* p. 44: "For those who define the good as self-mastery through reason, the aspiration is to be able to order their lives, and the unbearable threat is of being engulfed and degraded by the irresistible craving for lower things".

[340] R. Baskhar, *Reclaiming Reality*, p.1

[341]R. Baskhar, *Reclaiming Reality*, p.2.

[342]R. Baskhar, *Reclaiming Reality*, p.3.

[343] Ibid.

[344]R. Baskhar, *Reclaiming Reality*, p.4.

[345] Ibid.

[346] See R. Bhaskar, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*, (London, Verso, 1993). For Bhaskar's ethical naturalism see p.277, 283; for his moral realism see pp. 291-7; for his eudaimonism see pp. 284 – 90, 294 – 7; for ethical reductionism see 349-50.

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